MARJORIE DEAN

MARVELOUS MANAGER

PAULINE LESTER

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Leslie had posted herself behind the barrier of leafy green for the express purpose of watching the working out of a little plan of her own.
(Page 120) *(Marjorie Dean, Marvelous Manager)*

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MARJORIE DEAN
MARVELOUS MANAGER

By PAULINE LESTER

AUTHOR OF

"The Marjorie Dean High School Series," "The Marjorie Dean College Series," "The Marjorie Dean Post-Graduate Series," etc.

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THE MARJORIE DEAN POST-GRADUATE SERIES

A SERIES FOR GIRLS 12 TO 18 YEARS OF AGE

By PAULINE LESTER

MARJORIE DEAN, POST-GRADUATE
MARJORIE DEAN, MARVELOUS MANAGER
MARJORIE DEAN AT HAMILTON ARMS
MARJORIE DEAN'S ROMANCE

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By A. L. BURT COMPANY

MARJORIE DEAN, MARVELOUS MANAGER

Made in "U. S. A."

Tenth Ave. Baptist
Sunday School,
OAKLAND, - CAL.

MARJORIE DEAN MARVELOUS MANAGER

CHAPTER I.

ACROSS THE CAMPUS

"To go, or not to go?—that is the question," paraphrased Marjorie Dean glancing up from the open letter in her hand. She fixed her eyes on Jerry Macy, her room-mate as though trying to read what was in her chum's mind.

"Whether 'tis nobler to eat Baretti's turk,
And circulate upon the campus drear;
Or to take luggage and be off for home
To roost four days upon the family tree."

Jerry aptly supplied.

"Fine, Jeremiah. I certainly would love to roost on the Deans' family tree for four blessed days." Marjorie's voice rang with wistfulness.

"I've tried to persuade myself into believing that it won't make much difference to the dormitory girls if we decide we'd best go home for Thanksgiving. But I'm not sure." Marjorie knitted troubled brows. "This is the tenth," she reflected aloud. "Whether we go home, or whether we stay on the campus over Thanksgiving, we've enough to do beforehand to keep us hustling." She sprang up from her chair as though animated anew by the mere recollection of work yet to be done.

"Why remind me, beautiful Bean? I'm sadly aware of the fact. What we must do is organize the new Travelers' sorority and let them see the dormitory girls through Thanksgiving. If they do nicely," Jerry continued in patronizing tones, "their reward'll be more work, and lots of it. If they flivver—but they won't. We old Travelers knew how to pick out our successors. We're safe to go home and leave our Thanksgiving stunts to our little Traveler sisters to carry out. Ha; great intellect!" Jerry admiringly patted one of her own plump shoulders. "You always do suggest such brilliant ideas, Jeremiah," she gushed.

"How conceited you are! Still, there's a grain of wisdom in your vain remarks." Marjorie patted Jerry's other shoulder. "I hereby confer upon you

the high and noble order of the pat," she declared in a deep pompous voice. She accompanied her words with several pats, each one more forceful than the last.

"The hard and croo-il order of the whack, I'll say." Jerry caught the conferring hand in time to save herself one last thump. "Now that I've been initiated into this wonderful order what happens to me next?"

"I'll tell you in a minute. Let me think." Marjorie fixed absent eyes on Jerry as she considered the situation. "You're to go downstairs and telephone Kathie and Lillian to come over to dinner at the Hall this evening. If they can't come to dinner, then they must come afterward. Tell them the time has come to open the box. That will bring them."

"You bet it will," Jerry made slangy concurrence.

"Then I'll depend on you to hunt Leila, Vera, Ronny, Lucy and Muriel. They're not to dare think of another engagement."

"Yessum." Jerry made a respectful, bobbing bow to Marjorie. "Please, mum, may I ask what you'll be doing, mum, about the same time I'm rushing upstairs and down?"

"I'm going over to Silverton Hall," Marjorie re-

turned as she crossed the room to her dress closet and reached for coat and fur cap. "I'll see Robin, Phil and Barbara; bring them back to dinner, if I can. Thank fortune Barbara is at Silverton Hall this year instead of Acasia House. I'll be back by five o'clock. It's ten minutes to four now."

"Then you'll have to go some," Jerry said skeptically. "If you are back here with those three girls by six o'clock I'll give you a prize. Remember, you can't stay to dinner at Silverton Hall. We've Kathie and Lillian to consider."

"The prize is as good as won. What are you going to give me?" Marjorie's inquiry was slyly coaxing. She sidled confidently up to Jerry.

"Never mind now." Jerry waved her away. "Come back at five o'clock and ask me."

"I will. I'm going z-i-p-p across the campus. Just like that!" Marjorie made a lightning forward pass with one arm. "I'm going to have a wind sail. There's a dandy stiff wind blowing today. Mary Raymond and I used to take our school umbrellas when we were little girls and go out on a windy day with them. It was a regular game. We named it 'wind sails.' We'd let the wind blow us along. Sometimes the umbrellas would turn inside out, or the wind would whisk them away from

us and we'd have to chase them a long way. Once mine blew into the river, and once a big boy caught Mary's umbrella and ran off with it. We never saw either of those bumbershoots again."

Marjorie paused at the door to laugh at the recollection of childhood adventures. "Oh, Jerry," she changed the subject with sudden abruptness, "we'll have to dig up some eats for a spread. Whoever dreamed of gathering in the Travelers without feeding them?"

"I'll ask Leila to run us into town for eats as soon as you come back. That's an incentive to hurry," bribed Jerry.

"There are times when I can't help appreciating you, Jeremiah. Good-bye. I'm in *such* a hurry." Marjorie breezily closed the door and made a speedy descent of the stairs.

She opened the massive front door of the Hall with the same gusty energy, and went down the front steps at a frisky jump. The brisk November wind caught her none too gentiy, blew a fluff of curls about her sparkling face and a brighter color into her rosy cheeks. She paused for an instant on the drive to inhale deeply the crisp, invigorating November air, then she set off across the campus at her best hiking stride.

With the wind at her back, noisily urging her along, she laughed enjoyingly, spread her arms wide in lieu of sails and ran with it. Passing a little delegation of lingering robins, strung along a tree limb, their feathers fluffed out, their red breasts making a bit of autumn color against the brown limb, she whistled cheerily to them.

"Naughty little fellows," she playfully chided. "You should have started for the land of flowers long before now. You'll have to hurry if you expect to get there in time to eat Thanksgiving dinner with your folks. I ought to take that advice to myself."

Bump! Her eyes still lingering on the flock of birds, she collided forcefully with a girl who had deliberately courted collision. Muriel Harding, emerging from the library, had spied Marjorie from the library steps. Her mischievous love of teasing always uppermost, she had approached Marjorie unseen, bent on surprising her.

"Uh-h-h!" Muriel pretended to stagger back. "Why don't you look where you're going, lady?" she demanded gruffly.

"Why don't you?" The two girls faced each other, flushed and laughing.

"I did. I decided to let you know I was near you," confessed Muriel. "If you had been moder-

ately observing you might have averted the crash."

"I doubt it." Marjorie looked her skepticism.

"So do I," Muriel agreed so amiably that the pair again broke into laughter.

"You'd best come with me," Marjorie invited. "Jerry's hunting for you, but that'll be all right. I've found you." She went on to explain her errand to Silverton Hall. "Forward, march," she concluded, taking hold of Muriel's right arm. "Step lively. I've lost at least three precious minutes exchanging mostly impolite remarks with you."

"I'll hit up a pace," Muriel slangily assured. "I'm nothing if not obliging. It's fortunate for you that you met me. I am always *so* helpful." Her brown eyes danced roguishly. "You must *know* that."

"I've heard you say so." Marjorie was purposely vague. "If I had been even moderately observing I might have noticed that you were. That is, if you really——"

"Why dwell on the subject? This is the way the wild wind goes." She began whisking Marjorie over the half frozen ground at a mad run. Marjorie sturdily kept up with her. The two girls tore across the campus toward their goal, shrieking with laughter, bubbling over with high spirits.

They were nearing Craig Hall, one of the campus houses which they had to pass on their diagonal route to Silverton Hall, when the front door of the house opened and two young women came out on the veranda, then descended the steps. Evidently their ears caught the sounds of mirth emanating from the pair of exuberant P. G.'s. Two pairs of eyes, one pair coldly green, the other small, black and shrewd, immediately fastened on Marjorie and Muriel.

"Look who's here. Keep right on going," Muriel muttered in Marjorie's ear. She nodded to one of the two girls who had come from Craig Hall and were now within a few feet of her and Marjorie. Her nod was courteous rather than friendly. The response she received was a stiff inclination from Doris Monroe's golden head.

Marjorie had obeyed Muriel's muttered direction. For the barest instant her clear, truthful gaze met, impersonally, the narrowing, hostile eyes of Leslie Cairns. She then glanced serenely away from Leslie. She had long since ceased to regard Leslie Cairns with personal displeasure. This in spite of the ex-student's treacherous attempt to frustrate her and Robin Page's plans in the matter of the buying of the dormitory site.

As for Doris Monroe, Marjorie had been rebuffed by chilling looks on three different occasions when she had encountered and spoken to the haughty sophomore. She now claimed the privilege of one repeatedly ignored, to ignore in return. She had not given up the idea of carrying out a certain gracious little plan she had in mind to further the popularity of her beautiful "fairy-tale princess." Marjorie was too great of spirit to harbor resentment against Doris Monroe, simply because Doris did not like her. Instead she found herself experiencing the anxiety of one who had suddenly encountered a friend in a dangerous position.

CHAPTER II.

A DISQUIETING REMINDER

"Br-r-r!" Muriel made a pretense of shivering. "Did you notice how the Ice Queen scorned us? And what a noted person she had with her?" She waited until they had put a few yards between themselves and the other pair of girls before sarcastically launching the inquiries.

"Yes, I saw," Marjorie returned composedly. "I'm sorry. I knew Leslie Cairns was living in the town of Hamilton. This is the first time I have seen her since last summer."

"It's the first time I've seen her since before she left college," Muriel replied. "She's homelier than ever, but that cheviot sports suit and hat she has on are dreams. What a splendid combination—the Hob-goblin and the Ice Queen!" Muriel's private pet name for Leslie Cairns had always been the "Hob-goblin." "Sounds like the title of a fairy tale, doesn't it?"

"Exactly." Marjorie nodded abstractedly. She

had forgotten Muriel's uncomplimentary name for Leslie. With the return of it to memory came her own imaginative fancy regarding Doris Monroe. Yes, Doris was truly like an enchanted princess. Now Leslie Cairns had suddenly appeared, bearing fanciful resemblance to a wicked wizard. Marjorie smiled to herself at her own absurdity of thought. Still it made a certain impression on her which time did not obliterate.

"What are you thinking about, Marvelous Manager?" Muriel gave her chum's arm an emphatic tug. The two had kept up their swinging stride and were now nearing Silverton Hall. "Come down out of the clouds."

"Wasn't up in them," Marjorie smilingly denied. "I was thinking about Miss Monroe, and——"

"And the fatal results of cultivating Leslie Cairns," interrupted Muriel mockingly. "Don't worry, Marjorie. Trust the icy Ice Queen to look out for her own interests. Greek has met Greek. I've roomed long enough with the Ice Queen to know that she always pleases herself first. This being Leslie Cairns' motto, we may presently expect to find them on the outs."

"I hope so." Marjorie was not sanguine. "I've

learned by experience, Muriel, not to under-rate Leslie Cairns' capacity for making trouble."

"Oh, I know she's a star trouble maker, even if she has never succeeded in anything she tried to do to injure us," Muriel readily admitted. "But you stood so staunchly for the right, Marjorie Dean, in all the fusses we had with her and the rest of the Sans, things simply had to turn out O. K. at the last."

"I didn't stand out more strongly for the right than any of the other Travelers," Marjorie hastily corrected, her reply bordering on vexation.

"Certainly, you did, Modest Manager," Muriel cheerfully contradicted. "I have all the proofs of the case at my tongue's end."

"Keep them there," Marjorie told her with feigned displeasure.

"Oh, very well." Muriel was all amiability. "I may think of some other sweet little thing about you later."

Readers of the "MARJORIE DEAN HIGH SCHOOL SERIES," which comprises four volumes, and the "MARJORIE DEAN COLLEGE SERIES," also in four volumes, are thoroughly at home with Marjorie Dean and her many friends. "MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE POST GRADUATE," forms the initial volume

in the "MARJORIE DEAN POST GRADUATE SERIES." Returned to Hamilton College as a post graduate Marjorie took up the work she had set her heart upon doing. Surrounded by a devoted circle of girls who had kept pace with her in college, Marjorie felt that her most momentous year of enterprise and accomplishment had come.

Lack of unity at Wayland Hall had distressed her not a little since her return to the campus. She had dreamed rosy dreams of a unified Hamilton which she had fondly hoped might come true that very year. Instead, Wayland Hall, the house she loved best of all the campus houses, and her own roof tree, was brimming with dissention. She was now reflecting rather dispiritedly concerning this very thing. The encounter with Leslie Cairns and Doris Monroe had brought it foremost to her mind.

"I wonder how long Miss Monroe has known Miss Cairns?" she now mused aloud.

"Long enough to know better. There you go again, worrying over that selfish iceberg," Muriel cried impatiently. "I might beneficently warn her against the snares of the Hob-goblin, but would she be grateful? Far from it. No, no, Muriel. Never contemplate such folly." Muriel answered her own question in a prim, horrified tone.

"I quite agree with Muriel," Marjorie smiled faintly.

"Some of the upper class girls may tell her a few things about Leslie Cairns. They'd not forget her and the Sans in a hurry. If you had to room with her you'd lose your crush on her. She's is exasperating."

"I can't help admiring her. She is so beautiful," Marjorie made frank avowal. "I always have to stop and remember that she isn't amiable. There was one thing in particular that I noticed on the night last summer when we invited her downstairs to Miss Remson's spread. She was truthful. She didn't say she was too tired, or make any other excuses. She said flatly that she *didn't care to come downstairs.* Again, afterward, when we were in Vera's car and met her out walking one Sunday afternoon, we asked her to ride with us. She refused our invitation in the same scornful way. Still it was the *real* way she felt. A girl who wouldn't bother to deceive others must have principle," Marjorie earnestly advanced.

"Hum-m. That remains to be seen." Muriel was not thus easily convinced. "But will I be the one to see? At present the Ice Queen and I are as intimate as the North and South Poles. We don't even study at the same table."

"Poor old Muriel. Was it lonesome?" Marjorie flung an arm across Muriel's shoulders. They were now turning in at the flagstone walk in front of Silverton Hall.

"Yes, it was," grumbled Muriel. "But it's my own fault. I took that half a room to please myself. You girls ought to appreciate me and make a fuss over me because I refused to be separated from the Sandfordites."

"I'll call a special meeting after the Travelers go tonight and remind the Sandfordites of their duty," Marjorie teasingly promised as they went up the steps of the Hall.

The blended harmony of violin and piano outside Robin Page's room halted the visitors before the closed door. They had no more than willingly paused to listen when the music stopped.

"My last A string," mourned a voice. "I'll have to go clear to town for another. How provoking!"

Marjorie knocked three times in quick succession on the door, hers and Robin's particular rap. There was a scurry of light feet across the floor then Robin joyfully opened the door.

"What luck!" she exulted as she did a pleased little prance around the callers. "I was coming over to Wayland Hall directly after dinner. I've such a lot of things to get off my chest." She sighed.

"I'm fairly stuffed with responsibility. Hello, Muriel Harding. I haven't seen you for as much as two days. Where have you been keeping yourself? I want you for a singing number I'm going to have in our first show. We're going to open with a revue. you know."

"My A string just snapped," Phyllis Moore was ruefully informing Marjorie. "So aggravating. I was going to put in two hours of practice this evening. The only store in Hamilton where I can get another string closes at five o'clock. Goodness knows when I'll be imbued again with such a laudable desire to practice."

"You couldn't practice tonight if you had fifty A strings," Marjorie told her. "The time has come to open the box, Phil."

"Oh, lovely!" Phyllis' charming face lighted with pleasure. "Away with practice." She waved both arms outward with a buoyant releasing gesture.

"You're to come over to Wayland Hall now; you and Robin. Where's Barbara?"

"In her room, stuck with a theme. Hope she's struggled through it by this time. If she hasn't, I'll make her leave it; just as though it was a finished literary triumph. I'll go for her now." Phil dashed out the door and down the hall to Barbara Severn's room.

She returned in an incredibly short space of time with Barbara, the latter in outdoor attire.

"Hello, Red Bird," greeted Muriel. "Who so gay as you?" She shook Barbara by both hands, then turned her around so as to inspect her coat and cap of a wonderful shade of deep crimson, the gorgeous hue accentuated by wide collar, cuffs and bandings of bear's fur. "What a love of a coat and cap!"

"Isn't it, though? I am always planning to waylay Barbara on the campus some fine dark evening and strip her of that de luxe red coat and cap." Phil made threatening eyes at Barbara.

"I'm safe. She doesn't quite dare risk her dignity as president of the senior class," laughed Barbara.

Robin had already donned her wraps. It took energetic Phil not more than a minute to snatch her own smart coat of gray tweed from its accustomed hanger. She pulled a black soft Tam-o'-shanter with its huge fluffy black pom-pom down upon her crinkling yellow-brown hair at a truly artistic angle.

"Phil looks more like a wandering musician than ever in that Tam," was Marjorie's admiring opinion. The individuality of Phyllis' clothes and the careless, artistic grace with which the tall, supple girl wore them were a joy to Marjorie.

Down the stairs and out of the house trooped the

five friends, bent on making as good time to Wayland Hall as they could. Robin, Phil and Marjorie were anxious to have a talk before dinner about the program for the coming revue and their entertainment plans for Thanksgiving. Muriel had decided to go to town with Jerry and Leila in the car to help buy the eats for the spread. Barbara was eager to see Lucy Warner and glean from her certain biological pointers of which she stood in need. The group sped across the campus, reaching the Hall at just five o'clock.

"No mail for Muriel. What's the matter with the population of Sanford that I don't get any letters?" Muriel demanded severely as she turned away disappointedly from the Hall bulletin board.

"I had no idea of your vast importance in Sanford," giggled Barbara. "You talk as though you were the mayor of the town."

"Not yet," grinned Muriel. "I may be the mayoress of Sanford some day—say in about a hundred years from now." She duplicated Barbara's giggle. "Marjorie's the scintillating social star of Sanford."

Marjorie said not a word as she picked several letters from the bulletin board. Her eyes were glowing like stars at the harvest of mail. There was a letter from General; another from Captain; a third

in Mary Raymond's neat vertical script, had come from far-off Colorado. There was a fourth from Constance Armitage. Fifth and last was a letter in the sprawling childish writing of Charlie Stevens. She and Charlie, the latter now grown into a tall sturdy youngster of thirteen, were regular and enthusiastic correspondents.

In the rack above her own mail she caught sight of two letters for Jerry. One of them was in Helen Trent's familiar hand. The other—A swift blush overspread Marjorie's cheeks as she took the two letters from the board and placed them with her own. She knew only too well whose hand had dashed the address across the envelope.

Immersed as she had been in college matters she had given her old pal, Hal Macy, scant thought since her return to Hamilton campus. Sight of his letter to Jerry gave her pause; reminded her of something which intruded itself upon her not quite agreeably. Hal had not answered the latest letter she had written him. It had really been a long while since she had heard from him.

CHAPTER III.

LOYAL TO NO ONE

In the dining-room at Wayland Hall that evening plenty of curious and speculative glances were cast at the round dozen of Hamilton's staunchest children as they made merry at a special table which Miss Remson had provided for them.

From the next table to theirs the five Bertram girls exchanged occasional laughing signals and remarks with the distinguished little group of post graduates, seniors and one member of the faculty, the youngest though she happened to be. Aside from the warm friendliness of Gussie Forbes and her four chums there emanated from the other table of girls a peculiarly chilling atmosphere. It hinted of displeasure; a displeasure which stopped just this side of hostility.

"The sophs and freshies in the house can't see us for a minute," Jerry said to Leila in an undertone as they were awaiting the serving of the dessert. Feel the chill. Get me?"

"Tell me nothing." Leida cast a grim glance about the dining-room. Suddenly her grimness vanished into a characteristic flash of white teeth which always signified her utter amusement. "It is the Battle of Wayland Hall we shall be fighting before spring with a number of distinguished P. G. generals in the thick of the fray. It is the sophs who are ready now to roar at us. The freshies here will but echo the sophs' roars."

"Wayland Hall has been a regular hot-bed of trouble since the soph president was elected." Jerry used the same guarded tones. "With Gus and the disappointed Ice Queen under the same roof can you wonder?"

"I cannot." Leila's shrug was eloquent. "I have not been so completely disgusted with a set of girls since the bad days of the Sans."

"Bad days of the Sans?" Vera, seated at Leila's left, had caught the Irish girl's words. She now repeated them inquiringly. "What tales of ancient history am I hearing?"

"Ancient history that is trying to repeat itself," Leila returned with dry sarcasm. "I have been muttering in Jeremiah's ear that we are not favorites at the Hall."

"It's a case of top-lofty sophs and freshie-fresh freshmen." Vera gave a wise nod. "The tradi-

tional meek and lowly freshie is rapidly becoming an almost extinct species."

"So it would appear this year," Jerry agreed with an appraising survey of the long dining-room. Her glance rested for a moment on Doris Monroe, then traveled on to the students who sat at table with her.

"There are the members of the trouble bureau," she told Leila. "Look in the direction I'm looking and you'll know who I mean."

"I heard something about a trouble bureau." Marjorie, next to Jerry on Jerry's right, bent a laughing face forward to her room-mate. "What?"

"First time I ever head you commit a Cairnsism. For further information about the trouble bureau, find the Ice Queen," Jerry directed not without humor.

"Oh; I understand. But I won't look down at her. If she happened to see us looking at her she would probably be offended, just as Gussie Forbes was when she noticed us eyeing her the first time we saw her at Baretti's. I learned a lesson then. I don't intend to make the same mistake again." Marjorie spoke with the utmost good humor. She was not preaching to her chums, and they knew it.

"Merely because you're such an old friend of mine, Bean, to confide in you doesn't mean that

I'm gossiping, I'll say a word or two about the trouble bureau. That tall soph with the straight black hair, black moon eyes and pasty-white face is the chief disturber. She seems to be directing the Ice Queen's campaign. Muriel says she comes to see Miss Monroe about every half hour until the ten-thirty bell puts the kibosh on her visits."

Unlike Marjorie, Jerry could not refrain from voicing her disapproval of Doris Monroe and her group of sophomore satellites living at Wayland Hall. "The next agitator to Moon Eyes is the pudgy, red-haired soph with the mechanical voice. Their real names happen to be Miss Peyton and Miss Carter, but Muriel and I have made a few changes," Jerry declared with a whole-hearted grin. "Ahem! We call the pair the Prime Minister and the Phonograph. So true to life! What?"

Marjorie, Leila and Vera could not help laughing at the names Jerry and Muriel had waggishly applied to the two sophs. Miss Carter's speech had a habit of clicking itself from her lips with the mechanical precision of a phonograph. She had a wooden manner of carriage and walk which further added to the impression she gave of something mechanical. As for the name Muriel had picked for moon-eyed Miss Peyton, Muriel herself probably

best understood thus far its fitness as applied to the tall, austere looking young woman.

"The traditions of Hamilton say nothing about the naming habit." Leila shot a playful glance at Jerry.

"Er-r—well, it's remembering the stranger within our gate in a kind of way," Jerry defended. "Now that Muriel and I have named 'em specially we can remember 'em so much the better."

"Such ignoble sentiments from a Hamilton P. G.! I am shocked!" Vera's small hands went up in simulated displeasure.

"You'll get over the shock if you don't stop to think about it," Jerry assured her. "You may even learn to admire the Harding-Macy classification."

"It's certainly time the Travelers got together," Leila said, now more than half serious in her observation. "We must protect the Hall."

"I am with you in that, Leila," Marjorie observed, the light of sudden, unalterable purpose flaring strongly in her eyes. "We have Miss Remson as well as the girls here to think of. We've been through a siege of a house divided against itself once here. We must somehow not let that calamity overtake the Hall again."

"How are we going to stop it, Marvelous Manager, with Gentleman Gus and the Ice Queen all

ready to challenge each other to a duel?" quizzed Jerry. "I don't say it can't be done. I have great faith in you and your works, Bean." She beamed patronizingly. "I merely ask you: How is it going to be done?"

"I wish I knew," Marjorie laughingly confessed. "The Travelers will have to find a way to teach our freshies and sophs here to live up to the Hymn of Hamilton. That means we'll have to teach them without letting them know they are being taught."

Jerry looked impishly impressed. "What a simple pleasant task!" she exclaimed with pretended enthusiasm. "I should say we'd better cut out dessert, go right upstairs and plan for it. What's dessert? Nothing but fresh cocoanut layer-cake and coffee gelatine slathered with whipped cream. Who cares for any such trifles?" Jerry waved an airy hand. She made no move to leave her chair, however.

"Only you. The rest of us have no longing for sweet stuff. But we are so kind as to keep you company while you eat," Leila made bland assurance.

When the dessert was served the Irish girl deftly abstracted Jerry's portion of cake and gelatine from under Jerry's eyes and before the waitress had more than placed the dishes on the table. Up the line went the cake and gelatine until they reached Phil,

who sat at the head of the table. Phil welcomed them with effusion and grew tantalizing. She gave a dozen flimsy reasons supposed to justify her claim to it. The table rang with laughter so spontaneous and good-natured more than one of the freshmen at the Hall felt a secret sympathy spring up within for the girls whom they had heard characterized by Doris Monroe's most ardent supporters as "meddlers and hypocrites" and of having shown marked favoritism.

"If we were to make half the noise they are making Miss Remson would call us to account for it," sourly observed Julia Peyton to Clara Carter. "I've spoken to her several times about the racket that goes on every evening in Miss Forbes' room and in that Miss Dean's room, too. It's been worse since Miss Harding came to the Hall."

"I know it," Miss Carter nodded an eager red head. "Doris says she simply won't allow Miss Harding to carry on in her room the way she does when she's with her own crowd. She's generally to be found on the campus with some of them, screaming and laughing. Doris met her and Miss Dean when she was with that awfully rich Miss Cairns this very afternoon. She said she felt *so* mortified at being obliged to speak to Miss Harding. She doesn't speak to Miss Dean at all. She told

me she had good reasons for ignoring *her,* but she preferred not to give them."

"Humph." Julia cast a jealous glance at her companion as the two sophomores rose to leave the table. Each girl was jealous of the condescending friendship which Doris Monroe had chosen to give her companion. She felt that she stood a trifle closer to Doris than the other.

Doris was fully aware of this state of affairs. When she had recovered from the sweetness of her first triumph at being "rushed" she made up her mind not to allow her soph and freshie admirers to fail in allegiance to her banner. She soon learned that her selfish air of indifference was one of her greatest assets. It added individuality to her beauty. It impressed her worshippers with a high idea of the value of her acquaintance.

She had inherited this trait of indifference from her mother, whose counterpart she was. She had, as Marjorie suspected, a strong inclination to honesty, one of her father's finest traits. Thus she could not have pretended an indifference she did not feel. Since it was in her soul to be this she accepted the benefits she received from it with secret satisfaction. She was privately glad that she had no desire to be impulsive and readily responsive.

"*I* heard that the Miss Cairns you mentioned was expelled from Hamilton College," Julia said disagreeably. She was desirous of over-topping Clara's boastful reference to "Doris" and the intimacy it implied.

"Who told you?" Clara's tone was challenging.

"I'll not say who. I heard it, and it came to me directly from someone who knew," Julia made mysterious response.

"I—I—haven't heard any such story as that. I don't believe it's true. I'll ask Doris. *She'll* tell me," Clara ended, tossing her flame-colored head.

"You're very foolish to think of asking Doris," disapproved Julia, her shaggy black brows drawing together. "She'll set you down as impertinent. Even if she should know she wouldn't tell *you.*" She gave a short, sarcastic laugh.

"I'm not afraid to ask her," Clara doggedly persisted. "*You* may be, but *I'm* not."

This was the beginning of an angry discussion between the two sophomores which lasted all the way upstairs and for several minutes after the door of their room was slammed behind them by Clara. So vigorously did she slam it that the sharp sound reached the bevy of Travelers as they came trooping gaily upstairs. Robin was singing softly for them an old plantation song: "Get you ready there's a

meetin' here tonight," and Phil was patting her hands in time to it.

"Bing, bang; who fired the first shot?" exclaimed Muriel.

"It did sound almost like a shot, didn't it? I haven't heard such a splendid imitation of banging a door since the Sans used to vent their outraged feelings on the doors," chuckled Vera.

"That may have been the first shot fired in the Battle of Wayland Hall," Jerry gigglingly surmised to Leila.

"Then it was wasted on us," laughed Leila. "It will take more than the banging of a few doors to rouse our ire to the point of battle. Though make no mistake: 'The air is full of knives,' as we say in Ireland."

In the room occupied by Clara Carter and Julia Peyton the air was indeed full of verbal knives. Both had voted for Doris Monroe for president of the sophomore class. Both had pledged themselves, with certain other girls at the Hall, to "boost" Doris and "down" Augusta Forbes. Now they were squabbling fiercely over the lovely, indifferent object of their girl devotion. In their jealous anger with each other they had blindly overlooked the old saying: "In union there is strength."

CHAPTER IV.

TESTING TWO TRAVELERS

"REMEMBER, friends and fellow Travelers, this is a serious occasion." Ronny, as president of the original Five Travelers, stood facing her companions who had disposed themselves four in a row on Jerry's couch-bed and on chairs in alignment with the couch.

"It's not very serious any of us are looking, nor our worthy president, either," Leila declared, throwing Ronny a twinkling glance.

"Never judge by appearances—so very reckless, don't you know," Ronny rebuked, her charming face full of mischief.

"On with the meeting. No stops allowed for repartee. We've a lot to do, and a spread to eat up afterward," Jerry announced in her most judicial tones.

"Thank you for your delicate reminder that time is flying, Jeremiah." Ronny made Jerry a deep bow, meant to convey her humble gratitude. "As I was about to say when I was interrupted"—Ronny

stared hard at Leila—"we are to pass upon the names written on slips in this box." She held up a small square box of ornamental brass.

During their initial railway journey to Hamilton College more than four years previous the quintette of Sanford chums had helped while away the long hours on the train by banding themselves into a private, informal club which they named the Five Travelers' Club. They had found interest in looking upon themselves as five travelers about to explore the unknown country of College.

The little association had flourished and been a comfort to them during their freshman year. Every now and then, as the journey through the country of college continued they had added a member to the group. When Commencement and the end of their proscribed course came the still informal club had become the Nineteen Travelers.

It had become the earnest desire of the Nineteen Travelers to perpetuate the club as a sorority. After much discussion it had been decided to leave it as a parting gift to nineteen seniors. Due to the multiplicity of duties which the original Nineteen Travelers had pledged themselves to perform, the organization of the new sorority was left, unfortunately, until the last minute. By that time several

new-fledged seniors, eligible to membership, had departed for their homes.

It was Ronny who had then proposed that each Traveler should write on a slip of paper her choice of senior to succeed her. The slips were to be placed in a box, without having been examined, and the box placed in Miss Remson's care until the return the next fall of the post graduate Travelers to Hamilton College. To them would be intrusted the forming of the new sorority.

"I feel confident," Ronny continued, "that the seniors whose names are in this box are the very girls we most wish to carry on our club. Still, in the event that any one of you may have an objection to a name as read out by me, I will count ten slowly after the reading of each name. Anyone who may make objection must say 'no' within the count, and afterward frankly state her reason for so doing."

With this preamble Ronny put a hand in the box, drew from it a slip and solemnly read out: "Phyllis Moore." The laughing gleam in her gray eyes did not accord with her solemn face. "One, two——" she began.

A chorus of laughter drowned her voice, mingled with cries of: "No; no, indeed! I object."

"Mercy on us!" Up went Ronny's hands. "Such

strenuous objections! Sh-h-h. Be calm and state your objections, one at a time."

"We can't decide as to her qualifications for membership until she has been put to the test," boldly demanded Lillian Wenderblatt.

"Very well," Ronny agreed with the utmost amiability.

"Poor me." Phil groaned audibly.

"I would suggest that action be suspended on the candidate to be tested until the other names have been passed upon. In the event that there may be other candidates for the test they may then be put to the ordeal together." Marjorie made this sly proviso, and with apparent innocence.

"Other candidates!" exclaimed Barbara Severn. "I know only one other besides Phil. Poor me!"

"Barbara Severn." Ronny promply read out her name. Another burst of vigorous, laughing "Noes" ascended. Barbara was also condemned to the test.

During the Nineteen Travelers' senior year at Hamilton they had more than once invited Phil and Barbara to become members of the club. Both had refused the invitation, preferring to receive their election as a parting gift from their elder sisters. They had been as invaluable to the Travelers, however, as though they had been members. Now their comrades proposed to show appreciation in their own

peculiar fashion. None of the seventeen other names which Ronny read out for the august consideration of the Travelers were challenged.

"I am sure you will be pleased to hear that Miss Mason and Jer—Miss Macy will conduct the test," Ronny purred to the hapless candidates.

"That's right, half call me Jeremiah. Everyone's only about half respectful to me," grumbled Jerry.

"Oh, we're de-lighted," Barbara and Phil together satirically responded.

"So glad. As all appear to be pleased let the test begin," Ronny smiled encouragingly on the candidates.

"Ahem-m! Candidates rise and come forward. Stand there; exactly in line," Jerry dictated grandly. "You will now listen to Miss Mason while she explains to you the nature of the first test."

Vera came smilingly toward the two girls. "Here is a penny for each of you," she said generously. "You are not to spend it for candy. No, no." She shook a forbidding finger at them. "You are to get down on the floor and each shove your penny to the door and"—she beamed beneficently on her victims —"with your nose."

"Woof-f!" Phil made a despairing gesture.

"I can never do it," giggled Barbara, "but I'll try."

"We are waiting." Vera sweetly indicated the place on the rug on which the unlucky candidates were to prostrate themselves.

Phil was first to obey. Barbara paused to watch her and learn the way such a feat was to be performed. It took Phil not more than a minute to discover that creeping as a means of locomotion would not aid her penny's progress to the door. She was obliged to lie flat to the floor, face downward, and wriggle very slowly toward the goal, aiming constant dabs at the penny with her nose.

Her gallant progress in spite of odds so entertained Barbara she had to be reminded of her part in the test. She proved not nearly as skillful as Phil in the art of penny-shoving. Meanwhile the room rang with laughter.

"The candidates will now be allowed a breathing spell while I consult with my valued assistant and prepare the next degree," was Jerry's gracious announcement after Phil had triumphantly pushed her penny the required distance and Barbara had shoved hers over half way to the door.

The next degree appeared in the form of two rows of potatoes, placed at short distances apart. At one end of each row was a basket. Jerry handed Phil and Barbara each a teaspoon and assigned them to a potato row. "Start at this end. Pick up the pota-

toes on your teaspoon and carry them to the basket," was her next bland instruction.

"That sounds easy," sighed Barbara. "Oh, my nose," she tenderly rubbed it.

To balance a good-sized potato on a teaspoon and carry it across a room is a feat which requires practice. Phyllis and Barbara were novices at it. They toiled patiently at the ridiculous task while the Travelers had a hilarious time at their expense. Before either had succeeded in placing more than two or three potatoes in their baskets Vera called them off the job.

"We'll have to take your will for the deed," she told them. "Your sense of balance seems to be sadly lacking. Don't be discouraged. Both of you have splendid useful noses even if your potato carrying was wobbly. You've done nobly. Now we are going to give you a feed. I hope you won't mind being blindfolded for a little while. It's quite necessary.

"Nothing could please us more," Phil assured extravagantly.

"Whoever heard of an initiation without the candidates were blindfolded? Go as far as you like." Barbara was equally gracious.

Jerry proceeded to blindfold the two in her business-like way. Next she motioned to Vera, who

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brought forward two bungalow aprons. She and Vera politely assisted Phil and Barbara into the aprons. The pair were then led to chairs and ordered to be seated.

From the top shelf of her dress closet Jerry took a square pasteboard box. Opened, two immense, shining cream puffs were revealed. Laughter greeted the sight of them. The other Travelers recognized the puffs as having come from a certain bakery in the town of Hamilton where the size of the dainty and its extra-generous cream filling had popularized it among the Hamilton College girls.

"Here, Phyllis Marie Moore; you can't say I never treated you. In the absence of plates, hold out both hands." Jerry lifted one of the huge puffs from the box and carefully set it in Phil's obediently outstretched hands. She then went through the same performance with Barbara as the recipient. "Eat them nicely," she admonished with wicked significance.

"Eat them nicely," mimicked Barbara. "I can't eat a cream puff nicely when I can see every bite I take of it. Blindfolded—good night!"

"They're awfully good anyway," consoled Phil. She held the puff in one hand and went cautiously over the humps and bumps of the big pastry shell. She boldly attacked a corner which promised not to

let out too copiously the fairly thin cream filling. She did very well until she had eaten away enough of the shell to court disaster. It would have been hard enough to eat the puff daintily had she been able to see it. Minus sight and a plate or paper napkin on which to place it she soon managed to smear her face, hands and apron liberally with cream. She ate away desperately but there appeared to be twice as much filling as should have been.

Barbara did far worse at puff eating than Phyllis. Her frantic efforts to keep the cream within the bounds of its crisp brown shell sent her companions into shrieks of laughter. Worse still for them, Jerry had decreed that they could not wipe either hands or faces until she gave the word.

In the midst of the fun Marjorie obeyed a sudden impulse to leave the room and stand in the hall outside the door for a moment. She slipped away unnoticed, anxious to ascertain how plainly the laughter and talk of her companies sounded from outside. She and Jerry had hung three heavy portieres which Miss Remson had given them before the door leading into the hall and before the doors of the two dress closets. The manager had assured her that the portieres would serve to a great extent to deaden sounds from within the room.

She smiled her relieved satisfaction after she had

listened intently for three or four minutes. She could hear only faintly the sounds of conversation mingled with laughter. She was of the opinion that such sounds would not be disturbing to any student on the same floor.

"Watchman, tell us of the night," hailed Jerry as Marjorie again stepped into the room. "I know what you've been doing. You've been listening to how noisy we are."

"Right-o, Jeremiah. And we haven't been disgracefully noisy, after all," Marjorie gaily assured. "While the girls were laughing loudest at Barbara and Phil I stole out of here into the hall. I wanted to find out, if I could, just how noisy we were. That heavy curtain we hung over the door shuts the sound in beautifully. You can only hear it faintly from the hall."

"Good work, Bean; good work." Jerry patted Marjorie on the back. "We've two more stunts to put Phil and Barbara through yet and the crowd is getting hilariouser and hilariouser. Listen to them now."

A fresh gale of mirth testified to the truth of Jerry's remarks. It assaulted Marjorie's critical ears with almost dismaying force. Reminded of what she had just proven to her own satisfaction she grew reassured. Since that day, early in the fall, when

Doris Monroe had reported the joyful little welcome party in Gussie Forbes' room to Miss Remson as disturbing to her peace Marjorie and Jerry had been expecting the same dire fate would overtake them. Their room was the Travelers' headquarters as well as a favorite haunt of the five Bertram girls. "It's our positive good fortune that we escaped thus far," Marjorie had more than once told Jerry.

In itself to have been reported to Miss Remson as disturbers would not have troubled Marjorie and Jerry. Understanding between them and the brisk little manager of the Hall was complete. It was their standing as post graduates, their college honor which they prided themselves upon. As post graduates they would be first to be weighed in the balance. They ardently desired not to be found wanting even in small things.

What Marjorie had not known when she returned to Room 15 after her brief moment of listening in the hall was that she had been observed. Across the hall from Room 15 two interested sophomores had kept diligent watch since the Travelers had come upstairs from dinner. With their own door a few stealthy inches ajar they had heard, or imagined they heard, what they had been longing to hear—noise enough from "those tiresome, interfering P.G.'s" to warrant prompt action on their part.

CHAPTER V.

A LEADING QUESTION

Action came while Phil and Barbara were engaged in removing at least a third of the creamy contents of the puffs from faces, hands, necks and even hair. They "cleaned up" amidst the laughter and gay raillery of their friends.

"How much more must we endure?" demanded Barbara as she dried her cleansed features with a Turkish towel and began lightly powdering them at the mirror.

"Oh, not so much," tantalized Jerry. "There are a few more little stunts that——" Two imperative raps on the door sent Jerry hurrying to it. She pushed the portiere to one side; swung open the door to confront the tall, squarely-built sophomore whom she had nicknamed the Prime Minister.

"Good evening," she said in level tones. Her keen eyes were missing nothing. Her mind leaped at once to the nature of the other girl's intrusion, for such it was.

"Good evening." Her salutation was returned with haughty aggression. In fact every line of the sophomore's broad face and stiff, unyielding figure spelled aggression. Her peculiarly round black eyes, blacker in contrast to the unhealthy white of her skin, resentfully searched Jerry up and down.

"I wish to speak to Miss Dean at once," she demanded. "I know she is here." She eyed Jerry belligerently, as though to forestall a denial on her part.

"Of course she is here. We are entertaining our friends." Jerry's matter-of-fact reply brought a dull flush to Miss Peyton's pale cheeks. "Will you come in?" The concise invitation had a certain restraining effect upon the frowning caller.

"No, I will not," she refused, her own inflexion rude. "Ask Miss Dean to come to the door. I wish to speak to her, and to you."

"Very well." Jerry appeared non-committal. "Just a moment." She turned away from the door and beckoned to Marjorie.

Marjorie left Barbara and Phil, whom she had been assisting in the removal of the sticky traces of the puff test, and walked quickly to the door. In that brief second on the way to it a flash of dismay visited her. It drove from her eyes the light of laughter occasioned by Phil's and Barbara's com-

plaining nonsense as they scrubbed faces and hands.

"What is it, Jerry?" she asked as she reached her room-mate.

Jerry opened the door wider and made room for Marjorie in the doorway beside her. "Miss Peyton has something she wishes to say to us." Jerry's round face was enigmatic. Marjorie had but to glance at it to read there what others might not.

Within the room the buzz of conversation had lessened to a mere murmur. Muriel had been entertaining her chums with a flow of her funny nonsense. Even she had run down suddenly, seized by the same surmise which had occurred to her companions. Too courteous to stare boldly toward the door, canny conjecture as to the caller's errand temporarily halted the will to talk.

"Good evening, Miss Peyton." Marjorie's straight glance into the soph's smouldering eyes was courteously inquiring. Ordinarily she might have followed the greeting with a pleasantry. What she read in Julia Peyton's face held her silent; waiting.

"I have come to speak to you and Miss Macy about the noise you have been making this evening," blurted the sophomore, dropping all pretense of courtesy. "It is not only tonight I speak of. Almost every other night we have been annoyed by the noise in your room. It makes study impossible. We have

endured it without complaining, but we have had every reason for reporting it. Tonight you and your friends have been more annoying than usual. I decided the time had come to let you know it."

Before she could say more Marjorie broke in evenly with: "It is true that there is a larger party of girls than usual in our room tonight. We have been conducting an informal meeting of a club of which we are members. We spoke to Miss Remson beforehand, asking permission to hold the meeting in our room. We——"

"Oh, *Miss Remson!*" was the contemptuous exclamation. "She cannot be depended upon for fairness. We understand where her sympathies lie. We have spoken to her——" The sophomore stopped abruptly, caught in a contradiction of her own previous statement of not having complained.

"Pardon me. I understood you to say that you had not complained." Jerry could not resist a lightning opportunity to discomfit the other girl.

"I should have said that we had not—that we—that we had not reported you to President Matthews," amended Miss Peyton, glancing angrily at Jerry. Aggressive from the start she was fast losing her temper.

"I cannot allow you to accuse Miss Remson of unfairness without offering my strongest defense in

her behalf." Righteous indignation lent sternness to Marjorie's clear tones. "She is never unfair. She is always dependable. Since you have said that you reported us to her, I must believe you. She has not mentioned the matter to us. That means she does not consider us at fault."

"Oh, certainly she doesn't," was the sarcastic retort accompanied by a significant shrug of the square shoulders. *"That is precisely the trouble."*

"Please allow me to finish what I had begun to say to you." Marjorie made a dignified little gesture. "On the day when Miss Monroe reported Miss Forbes and a few of us who were in her room welcoming her back to college, we talked things over with Miss Remson. Since then we have been more careful not to give offense to other students at the Hall than at any time during our past four years at Hamilton. Miss Remson gave us heavy portieres to hang before the doors when we expected to entertain a number of girls. These deaden the sound. You can see for yourself how heavy and closely-woven this one is." Marjorie took hold of a fold of the portiere. "I purposely went into the hall tonight and closed the door after me to find out if we were too noisy. I was surprised at the small amount of noise that came from our room."

"I am surprised to hear such statements from a

post graduate." Julia Peyton gave a discomfited sarcastic laugh. "Frankly, Miss Dean, I have been so disappointed in you. When first I came to Hamilton I had the greatest respect for you. I regret that I should have been obliged to change that opinion." Julia believed she had said something extremely telling. "Yes; and I do not approve of the way your post graduate friends have tried to run Wayland Hall. It surely does not add to Miss Langly's credit as a member of the faculty," she ended in malicious triumph. She was inwardly furious at Marjorie's and Jerry's quiet but determined defense of their own conduct.

"Your harsh opinion of our friends is not justified." Marjorie's curt proud tones contained censure. "Let me advise you to be careful and not repeat such opinions on the campus. Our friends would not suffer as a result. They are known to be true to the traditions of Hamilton. You would merely succeed in creating unpleasantness for yourself."

"I don't care for your advice." Miss Peyton blazed into sudden wrath. "You are only trying to frighten me into not reporting you and your friends. You meant yourself, too, but you were clever enough not to include yourself in your remarks. I shall report the whole affair to President Matthews; not

later than tomorrow morning." She whirled angrily; started across the hall.

"Wait a minute." Something in Jerry's tone arrested the miffed soph's progress. "I'd like to ask you a question."

"Well?" Miss Peyton put untold frost into the interrogation.

"Why"—Jerry paused—"if you and your roommate were so greatly disturbed by our noise, did you not close your door? That would have at least helped considerably to shut out the noise."

"Our door was—" began the soph furiously.

"Partly open," supplied Jerry. "I am quite sure it was," she continued sweetly, "because I happened to go into the hall and saw for myself."

CHAPTER VI.

LITTLE HOPE FOR P. G.'S

"STUNG, and by the truth!" Jerry gave an exultant skip into their room behind Marjorie and hastily closed the door. Miss Peyton, confronted by unassailable truth, had no defense ready. She glared wrathfully at Jerry and Marjorie and hurriedly disappeared into her room.

"We can guess what it's all about," greeted Muriel Harding. "We ought to be shocked and amazed, Marvelous Manager, at *you* for fussing. We might expect it of Jeremiah."

"You might; you bet you might." I'd have done all the fussing this time if Marjorie hadn't begun answering that trouble hunter first. Believe me Leila, the first attack in the Battle of Wayland Hall was made right at our door. I'm happy to announce that the enemy was sent fleeing across the hall with one good hot shot fired by the Travelers' friend, J. J. G. Macy. *"I'm the one."* Jerry proudly thumped her chest.

"Could you hear what we were saying?" Marjorie glanced interestedly about the half circle of girls, eagerly formed around her. "I know you would try *not* to listen."

"We could hear only a word now and then," Vera made haste to answer. "Of course it was a complaint about us. What is the matter with these sophs? They weren't so obstreperous last year as freshies?"

"I took Miss Peyton to the freshman hop last year," said Lillian Wenderblatt. "As a Traveler in the midst of Travelers I may say she was very ungracious to me. I accepted her rudeness as not having been intentional; laid it to her natural manner. Since I've heard her rated as the rudest student on the campus."

"Gussie Forbes says that the freshies who made life hard for her and her pals last year are the sophs who are trying to do it again this year," said Phillys Moore.

"Gussie is a wise child. And with Muriel's celebrated Ice Queen to add to the snarl what hope is there for a few poor old P. G. ladies who had hoped to live out their days in peace on the campus? Oh, wurra, wurra!" Leila crossed her hands over her breast, clutched her shoulders with her fingers, thrust out her chin and rocked herself two and fro

with the appearance of a mourning old woman.

"What a dandy old woman you make, Leila. I'm going to cast you for an old hag part in a melodrama, if I can find a good one. The campus is howling for a truly lurid one with outlaws, an abducted child, a lost heiress, an old hag and various other nice pleasant little characters." Robin was always on the lookout for features. "We can ask three dollars a seat for a zipping old "dramer" and crowd the gym."

"It's a good deal more pleasant to talk of shows than fusses," Marjorie declared, smiling at Robin's latest ambition. Glancing up at the wall clock she gave a quick exclamation. "Jerry," she cried, "we'll have to trot out the spread instanter!"

"Don't I know it. I've already begun." Jerry made a dive toward her closet.

"What about those two stunts for the candidates?" Lucy Warner caught Jerry by an arm.

"Why, Luciferous, how you do like to see people get into trouble, don't you?" grinned Jerry.

Lucy's grave, studious face relaxed into the wide, utterly pleased smile which Muriel and Jerry both enjoyed calling to it. She broke into the funny little half giggle, half gurgle which was always productive of laughter in others.

"The *idea, Luciferous,* of your calling attention

to poor Barbara and me after all we've suffered!" Phil turned reproachful blue eyes on Lucy.

"Oh, I'm not so mean as you think me," Lucy's odd greenish eyes flashed warm lights of fun. "It was a case of either stunts or eats. It's going to be eats, so good night stunts."

" 'Good night stunts,' " repeated Muriel. "You never learned them words from Prexy Matthews, Luciferous."

"I should hope not," chuckled Lucy. "All the slang I know I learned from you and Jeremiah. Kindly remember that."

"I wish to forget it immediately," Muriel looked askance at the accusation.

With the hands of the clock pointing to ten minutes to ten Marjorie and Jerry, with Leila's and Vera's help rushed the eatables for the spread to the center table. Leila had furnished a box of Irish sweet crackers and a case of imported ginger ale. The ginger ale had arrived only the day before from across the ocean. Sweet pickles, stuffed olives, stuffed dates, salted almonds and small fancy cakes comprised the lay-out. There had been no time to make sandwiches.

Supplied with paper napkins and paper plates the guests helped themselves to the spread. They formed in an irregular group on each side of Jerry's couch

which held its usual four of their number. Marjorie and Jerry seated themselves on the floor in front of the couch bed. Unintentionally they formed the center of the group.

"At last you can tell us what was said at the door," sighed Robin. "It isn't curious to want to know, since we are concerned in it, too."

"I wish you to know," Marjorie reflectively bit into a maccaroon. "I'll try to repeat as exactly as I can what was said. Then you'll understand the situation better." She recounted the conversation which had taken place at the door between herself and Miss Peyton.

"Report us to Prexy; the idea!" scoffed Lillian Wenderblatt. "She is an ambitious trouble hunter. She'll find plenty of troubles if she carries any such tale to him."

"I should say as much!" was Vera's indignant cry. "Imagine a soph reporting P. G.'s and double P. G.'s and faculty and the P. G. daughter of Professor Wenderblatt! Not to mention Prexy's own indispensible private secretary! And for what? No vestige of a reason."

"If she does report us, Prexy's own indispensible private secretary will take action," threatened Lucy. "I'd be the first person the president would ask about it. If Miss Peyton went to see him in per-

son I'd hear of it from him afterward; I'm sure. If she wrote him, I'd see the letter and take the answer he dictated. I'd ask him if I might tell you girls about it, too." The light of devotion shone strongly in Lucy's face.

"Who's Prexy? We're not in awe of him with our Luciferous on the job," was Ronny's confident declaration. "Long may she flourish." She held up her glass of ginger ale. The others followed her example, careful, however, to "Drink her down" with repressed enthusiasm.

"I ought to be ashamed to face my classes tomorrow with the sword of Miss Peyton's disapproval hanging over my head," Kathie remarked in the pleasant lull that followed the drinking of the toast to Lucy.

"But are you?" quizzed Muriel. "I'm afraid from your tone that you aren't."

"Your fears are well grounded," laughed Kathie. "The sophs and freshies at the Hall, judging from accounts, seem to be positively childish," she continued in a more serious way. "They're not snobs as the Sans were. There's some hope for them. I'll venture to say that before next June Marvelous Manager will have managed them." Her prediction was one of confident affection.

"Such a foolish name; and you will say it," scolded

Marjorie and not quite in jest. "A fine manager I am. I can't even manage my own affairs. I can't decide whether to go home for Thanksgiving, or stay here," she added in self-derision.

"One thing we *must* decide before we separate," Ronny said with energy. "Where shall we meet tomorrow night? Remember we shall be twenty-nine strong. We can't hold the meeting in one of our rooms. We must have plenty of space for our new Travelers. The living room down stairs isn't private enough. Has anyone a really brilliant suggestion. No other kind is desired. Save your breath."

"I have. Hold the meeting in our library," proposed Lillian Wenderblatt. "I'll put a sign on the library door before dinner tomorrow night: 'Professor Wenderblatt: Keep Out,' and lead Father to the door to look at it. Then he won't bolt into the room with maybe two or three other professors in the middle of our meeting."

Lillian's proposal was received with approbation and accepted with alacrity. Leila, Vera, Robin and Lillian were chosen to notify the fortunate seniors of the honor in store for them. The rest of the details of the meeting were quickly arranged. Ten-thirty was not far off.

"Don't imagine for a minute that you have seen

the last of your initiation," Jerry informed Phil and Barbara, a threatening gleam in her eye. "There are still those two degrees, you know."

"Oh, forget them. We shall," Phil made untroubled return.

"You may forget, but I—nevv-vur." Jerry struck an attitude.

"Nor I." Muriel dramatically tapped her chest and glared at Phil. "'Sdeath to all quitters," she hissed.

"Oh, glorious for my melodrama!" admired Robin. "You and Jeremiah shall be the villains."

"I choose to be the principal, double-dyed scoundrel of the show," stipulated Muriel, "or else I'll refuse to see your play. I spurn anything and everything but complete villainy."

"Give me a better part than Muriel or I won't act," balked Jerry.

"I'm going to fly before any more actors go on a strike," Robin raised a protesting hand. "I must look out for Page and Deans' melodramer."

"Only birds, insects, aviators and 'sich' fly," criticized Phil. "I simply must get back at you for not giving me a cousinly warning of what was in store for me tonight."

"Seniors, P. G.'s and faculty will add to the flying

classification or lose what shreds of reputation for integrity they have left," laughed Kathie.

"An added word of warning:—Hotfoot it lightly." Jerry's forceful if inelegant injunction sent the initiation party down the hall dutifully smothering their easily summoned mirth. Jerry accompanied the party to the head of the stairs. She returned to the room, keeping an alert watch as she walked on a certain door across the hall. This time she noted with satisfaction that it was tightly closed.

CHAPTER VII.

JERRY SPEAKS HER MIND

"THE ten-thirty rule will have to chase itself merrily around the campus," Jerry made airy disposition of that time-honored regulation as she entered the room which Marjorie was already beginning to set to rights. With her usual energy the stout girl gathered up the glasses, tucking them one inside another and setting them in a compact row at one end of the study table.

"I agree with you, Jeremiah. I have letters to read that must be read, ten-thirty rule or no." Marjorie whisked an armful of crumpled paper napkins and empty paper plates into the waste basket. "There;" she cleared the table of crumbs; "that'll do for tonight. Thank goodness, all the eats were eaten."

"I can count on my fingers the times we've defied old ten-thirty," Jerry declared as she reached in the table drawer for her two letters.

"Ten times in four years," Marjorie commented. "That's a good record."

"True, Bean, true. When we stop to consider the past—how wonderful we are!" Jerry simpered self-appreciatively at Marjorie as she sat down under the drop light with her letters.

"How can I help but believe it when you say it like that?" rallied Marjorie. "Anyway, you're a gem, Jeremiah. I was never more agreeably surprised than when you turned the tables on Miss Peyton tonight. I hadn't noticed that their door stood open. But you had, smart child. I had no idea you'd been out in the hall on a tour of discovery."

"I went directly after you were out there. I had a hunch that the Ice Queen would start something. So she did—through those two geese. They had that room last year and didn't appear to mind our occasional soirees. But there's still another and a chief disturber—Leslie Cairns. She's back of the Ice Queen."

"I think so, too," Marjorie admitted with reluctance. "I have seen them together several times. Leslie Cairns has other friends on the campus, too. Muriel and I saw her and Miss Monroe coming out of Craig Hall this afternoon."

"You did?" Jerry showed surprise. "I'll investi-

gate that. I may find out something interesting. Miss Morris, that nice senior you've heard me speak of, who came to the campus last fall from Vassar. says there are only seniors and juniors at Craig Hall this year. Perhaps it was the Ice Queen's friends she and Leslie Cairns were calling upon."

"That may be," Marjorie agreed. "I wonder if Miss Monroe likes Leslie Cairns? Perhaps she cares more about cars and expensive clothes and spending money than anything else. We don't know her, so we can't even guess what sort of girl she is at heart."

"I know what will happen to her if she puts any dependence in Leslie Cairns," Jerry said grimly. "Don't waste your sympathy on her, Marjorie. She isn't worthy of it."

"I don't know why I feel so sorry about her, but I do," Marjorie confessed. "Whenever I see that beautiful face of hers I forget she's been so ungracious to us. She's not a namby-pamby kind of pretty girl. She has a high, royal kind of beauty. I've not given her up yet, Jeremiah. I'm going to try popularity for her against Leslie Carins' money. I'm going to put her in the first show we have. I'll have Robin ask her. I'll stay in the background for awhile."

"Nil desperandum," Jerry encouraged with an in-

dulgent grin. "Mignon La Salle reformed just to please Marvelous Manager. Why not others? Besides there's always the pleasant possibility that the Hob-goblin and the Ice Queen may squabble and part."

"So Muriel says. I mean about those two girls disagreeing. You may make fun of me all you please, Jerry. Just the same if we could win Miss Monroe over to our side it would gradually put everything straight here at the Hall. If Miss Monroe became our friend, she would probably become friends with the Bertram five. She's friends already with the other sophs and freshies here. Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other, you know. Leslie Cairns' friendship cannot be beneficial to her. I am sure of that. Yet to warn her against Miss Cairns would be contemptible. Excuse me, Jeremiah, for keeping you from your letters!" Marjorie exclaimed in sudden contrition. "It'll be midnight before I've read all these." She flourished the handful of letters before Jerry's eyes.

"Go to it, or it may be morning. Why waste precious time flaunting your letters in my face? Why should your five to my two make you vainglorious?"

"Who's vainglorious?" Marjorie made a half threatening move up from her chair. She dropped

back again, laughing, as Jerry nimbly put the length of the table between them.

"Lots of people are vainglorious." Jerry wisely grew vague. "Don't bother me, Bean. I hope to read my letters in peace and quiet. Yes?"

"So do I," emphasized Marjorie.

The chums exchanged good-humored smiles, born of perfect understanding and settled down to the patiently deferred reading of their letters.

Jerry read Helen's letter first. She knew it would be long and absorbing. Hal's would be his usual brief note. It was his weekly offering. Long since Jerry had made him promise to write once a week and had pledged herself to do the same by him. A strong devotion lived between brother and sister which had deepened year by year. Hal did not pretend to understand Jerry from the standpoint of girlhood. To him she was a good comrade; "the squarest kid going." Jerry was of the private belief that she knew Hal better than he knew himself.

Her one sorrowful concern in life was the knowledge that Marjorie "couldn't see old Hal for a minute." She would have tried to further Hal's unflourishing cause with Marjorie, but there seemed to be no way of accomplishment. She knew only too well Marjorie's utter lack of sentimental interest in Hal; her rooted aloofness to "love" as Hal had

hoped she might experience it. "A regular stony heart," Jerry had secretly characterized her.

Jerry had shrewdly divined for herself the true state of affairs between the two. Neither had ever spoken intimately to her of the other. Nevertheless when Marjorie had left Severn Beach for her midsummer journey to Hamilton during the summer previous, Jerry had been convinced that she had "turned Hal down." She had wondered then, and since, how Marjorie could fail to love her big, handsome brother—not because he had been devoted to her since their first meeting—but for himself.

The expression of good-natured amusement which had visited her face during the reading of Helen's letter remained until she had read Hal's note several times. Then concern replaced it, making her round face very solemn. She shot a covert glance at Marjorie who was deep in Mary Raymond's letter. She had already devoured the contents of her General's and Captain's letters. Both had been comparatively short and loving inquiries as to whether they might hope for her "gracious presence at Castle Dean over Thanksgiving." Neither superior officer had made a point of asking her to come home. Unselfishly, as ever, they deferred to her judgment.

Marjorie had gulped down her rising emotions

as she had read and realized afresh her father's and mother's breadth of spirit. She had taken up Mary's letter, feeling that she must go home at all events for the holiday. Mary had the long and astonishing confidence to impart that she had fallen in love, was engaged to be married the following September and that her engagement was soon to be announced at a formal luncheon to be given for her by her mother.

"Oh, Jerry!" Marjorie looked up brightly from her letter. "Mary's going to be married. I'll tell you all she writes about the great event while we are getting ready for bed. I haven't time now." Her hands were busy opening the letter from Constance as she spoke. Again she dropped into silence and the perusal of Connie's letter. "Isn't it too bad?" she soon cried out. "Connie and Laurie are not going to be in Sanford for Thanksgiving. Laurie promised a composer friend of his to be present at the first performance of his new opera 'The Azure Butterfly.' He and Connie are going to New York."

"That settles it for me. There'll be one distinguished mug missing on the campus. I'm going home for Turkey Day." Marjorie's news concerning Constance and Laurie had crystalized Jerry's wavering resolve to go to Sanford. "Poor old Hal! A fine time he'd have with all of us away!"

A swift flood of crimson deepened the glow in Marjorie's cheeks; rose even to her white forehead. She stared self-consciously at Jerry for an instant. Without a word she laid down Connie's letter and took up the envelope addressed to her in Charlie Stevens' straggling hand.

First exploration of its contents and she broke into a low amused laugh: "Do listen to this, Jerry," she begged.

Jerry raised her eyes from Hal's letter, at which she had been soberly staring. She was provoked with herself for having mentioned Hal to Marjorie as an object for sympathy.

Occupied with the letter from Charlie, Marjorie did not notice Jerry's gloomy features. Mirthfully she read:

"DEAR MARJORIE:

"I think your last letter to me was a dandy. I read it twice and I was going to read it again only I lost it. Maybe I lost it on the football ground or in the street. But if anyone finds it they'll see your name on the end of it and guess that I am the right Charlie it belongs to. Then I might get it again. I know you won't be mad cause I lost it. I couldn't help it.

"Connie is going to New York with Laurie for

Thanksgiving. She has to go because he is her husband. We are very sorry. I don't mean we are sorry because Laurie is her husband but because they are going away. The band is coming to our house for a party on Thanksgiving evening. I am going to play an awful hard piece on my fiddle that Father Stevens composed just for me. You'd better come home and then you can come to see us that night. I like you, Marjorie, quite a bit better than Mary Raymond. Connie says Mary is going to be married. I used to say when I was real little that I was going to marry her. I don't say it now. I didn't know any better then.

"I hope there will be snow and ice on Thanksgiving. Will you go skating on the pond with me if there is? I can skate fine and make a figure eight and a double loop on the ice. Hal Macy took me to the Sanford ice rink last Saturday afternoon. He showed me how to make the figure eight. He is a dandy fellow, only he doesn't talk much. You ought to see him play basket ball. He has all the Sanford fellows beat. I like him because he always goes around with the fellows and not the girls. He thinks you are quite nice. I let him read your letter before I lost it and he said I was a lucky kid. I could write some more but I can't think just what to write. I will write some more some other time.

You had better come home soon. You and me and Hal Macy will go skating. It is all right for you to go with him. He would just as soon go any place with you because he has been to your house lots of times to parties and you have been to his house and that's the way it is. I have to go and practice an hour on my fiddle so good-bye Marjorie and I send you my love. Hurry up home.

"From you best friend,

"CHARLIE STEVENS."

"Good for that kid!" The cry of approbation came straight from Jerry's heart. "Old Hal has had a lonesome time in Sanford for the past two years. He could have gone into business for himself in New York after he was graduated from college, but he knew Father needed him in his business." Jerry checked herself with the reminder that Hal would not wish her to glorify him, especially to Marjorie.

"Hal is splendid." Marjorie was always first to give Hal his due, impersonally. "I know it has been lonesome for him in Sanford without the old crowd and—and—he must miss you so, Jerry," she finished rather lamely. She meant it in all earnestness. She understood perfectly the bond between Hal and Jerry.

"Not half so much as I'm sure he misses you." Jerry grew bold for once. "This is what he has written me. You can see for yourself what a good sport he is." She did not look at Marjorie as she read:

"DEAR JERRY:

"Yours of last week appreciated. You haven't yet said what you are going to do about Thanksgiving. That I suppose will depend on the way matters stand at Hamilton. If you don't come home I will keep Father and Mother busy looking after me so they won't miss you too much. Connie and Laurie will be in New York over Thanksgiving so I must cheer up Charlie by taking him to the football game between the Riverside Giants and the Sanford High team. I have been coaching the Sanford fellows a little. It's going to be some game. Hope you'll be on hand to see it.

"Just remind Marjorie that I wrote her last. Tell her she can square herself with me by coming home for Thanksgiving. Connie told me yesterday she had written to Marjorie. Hard lines to have Connie and Laurie away on the grand old day. Better try and see what you can do for me. With love. Good night old kid.

"HAL."

"Why, I don't owe Hal a letter!" Marjorie regarded Jerry in surprise. "He owes me one."

"He *does?*" Jerrry showed more surprise than had Marjorie. "Well, I believe both of you. It's a plain case of 'all have won.' Meanwhile where is that latest glowing proof of a flourishing correspondence?"

"Lost in the mail, perhaps," Marjorie guessed. She became silent for a moment. "I'm doubly sorry about it. I shouldn't care to have Hal think—" Marjorie paused; looked away from Jerry's keen blue eyes, so like Hal's, in confused embarrassment.

"You know what to do." Jerry kindly ignored the embarrassed slip. "Go present him with your regrets in person. I'll give a hop, and invite you to it. Won't that be nice? Old Hal won't care if you are the only one invited." She could not refrain from a side-long glance at Marjorie.

"Imagine Hal and me dancing solemnly around your big ball room together, the only guests at your hop." Marjorie forced a laughing tone of raillery.

"Nothing would please him better," Jerry stoutly maintained. It was the nearest to an opinion concerning Hal's and Marjorie's non-progressive love affair that wary Jerry had ever ventured.

CHAPTER VIII.

TWO THINGS SHE KNEW ABOUT LOVE

THIS time the blue and brown eyes met squarely. Marjorie's expression was a mixture of tolerance, vexation and resignation.

"I said it." Jerry read the glance aright. "I'll say it for myself, too. Nothing would please *me* better. You know the rest. It's the first, last and only appearance of Jeremiah as a buttinski. I knew that someday, somehow, somewhere I'd say something about you and Hal. 'Scuse me, Bean, 'scuse me." Jerry's apology was half joking, half earnest.

"Why—I—why—Jerry!" Marjorie stammered. She grew rosy from white throat to the roots of her curly hair. Concerning Hal's avowal of love, her captain had been her only confidant. Even Constance did not know the circumstances of that bright summer afternoon which she had spent with Hal aboard the Oriole. "Why—Jurry-miar!" She used Danny Seabrooke's nickname for Jerry, with a rather tremulous laugh." Who—I never—"

"Nope; of course not." Jerry's reply was comfortingly positive. "Both you and Hal belong to the high inner order of the tight-shell clam. I can only guess how you stand with each other. I know he loves you. Never think he told me that. I knew it almost as soon as we first met you. It's the same true love, broadened and deepened, that he's giving you today. I wish you cared about him even one-half as much as he cares about you. You'd be loving him some. But I'm afraid you don't. And that's flat."

"No, Jerry I don't, and it is a relief to be able to say it frankly to you." Marjorie's recent confusion was clearing away. Her grave serenity of tone robbed her candid confession of all harshness.

"I've always hated to believe you didn't for Hal's sake. I was pretty sure of it last summer at the beach," was Jerry's sober answer.

"I'm *never* going to marry, Jeremiah," Marjorie informed her room-mate with a kind of pessimistic solemnity. "If I couldn't love Hal enough to be his wife, knowing how splendid he is, surely I couldn't marry any other man. Don't think me selfish because I put my work at Hamilton above love. It is life to me—my highest, most complete ideal."

Jerry surveyed her chum's lovely, but very digni-

fied features for an instant. She was divided between a desire to admire Marjorie's lofty purpose in life and shake her soundly for her deliberate repudiation of Hal and his warm true love.

"I—I'm not sorry you spoke to me of Hal. I'd like you to know that—that we're not betrothed—nor never will be." Marjorie's voice dropped on the last four words. "Only Captain and General know. Not even Connie. I don't think I have the right to tell her. If Hal tells Laurie, he may ask Laurie to tell Connie. I hope so."

"I know old Hal wouldn't tell me." Jerry's voiced conviction was emphatic. Jerry was more disturbed than she then realized by the "wallop" which Marjorie had managed to "hand" old Hal somewhere along the road of time from the date of Connie's wedding. She was inwardly convinced that the "turn-down" had come at the beach.

"I shall tell him that I have told you, Jerry," Marjorie quietly announced. "It is Hal's privilege to tell Laurie and your father and mother. It was mine to tell either you or Connie as my closest girl friend. I have chosen to tell you. You are as dear to me as Connie; but not dearer. Only—in this you have the first right to know."

Marjorie smiled very tenderly on Jerry. Her plump, but not over-plump, partner in the journey

through the land of college sat abstractedly scribbling on the back of one of her envelopes, head bent low. She was not far from tears. Jerry loathed tears when, on rare occasions, she had been what she termed "cry-baby" enough to shed them.

"Much obliged." She now spoke gruffly to hide her threatened flow of emotion. "I—I wish you felt differently about Hal, Marjorie. I—I—always looked forward to having you for my sister in that way." Jerry absently turned the envelope over and continued to write on its under side.

"Oh, Jeremiah, you're just as much my sister now as you would be if I were—" Marjorie suddenly checked her impulsive assurance. Her honest nature compelled her to desist. No; it was not the same. She knew that no declaration of sisterhood to Jerry on her part could compare with the delight which would be her chum's were they to become sisters through her marriage with Hal.

"Not the same, Bean; not the same." Jerry shook a positive head.

"I know it isn't. I knew it almost as soon as I said it," Marjorie admitted rather humbly. "I love you a lot, Jerry. Most of all because you have always loved me and wanted me for your sister. I'm glad you spoke to me about Hal. There's one thing I can do for him. Go to Sanford and help you give

him a jolly Thanksgiving. We owe it to him to please him; more than we do to please the dormitory girls. He's the one most in need of good cheer this Thanksgiving."

"Ha-a-a-a!" Jerry sat up very straight and drew a long relieved breath. "You're the best little sport, Marjorie Dean! I was afraid you might not care to see poor old Hallelujah on account of having turned him down."

"I sha'n't mind seeing Hal," Marjorie said slowly, "for truly, Jerry, in my own way I like him as well as ever. I haven't changed toward Hal. My attitude toward him is purely that of friendship. But he has changed. We're like two persons, standing on opposite banks of a broad river, trying to call across to each other. Neither of us can understand the other. I wonder why true friendship can't content Hal. He wonders why I can't understand love." She cast an almost mournful glance toward Jerry which Jerry did not forget for many days afterward.

"I only know two things surely about love," Marjorie continued after a brief silence. "One is that I have never been in love. The other is that without love no marriage can be happy. And now let's not talk of love any more, *ever again,* Jeremiah,"

she ended in a whimsical tone which made Jerry smile.

"All right. Anything to please you, Bean," she replied. She was secretly elated over Marjorie's decision concerning Thanksgiving. Nothing could please Hal more she was sure. "It's midnight, anyway. Time we put a curb on our talk fest." She rose to begin preparations for sleep. She would have liked to assure Marjorie of how glad "old Hal" would be, but had agreed to Marjorie's taboo.

Marjorie gathered up her handful of letters from the table, a contented little smile showing at the corners of her red mouth. She was glad that she and Jerry were going home; that the momentous decision had been made. Picking up the last envelope left on the table she saw it was not one of hers, but Jerry's. A fresh flood of scarlet flew to her cheeks as she saw scribbled across the envelope in Jerry's hand: "Marjorie Dean Macy."

CHAPTER IX.

MEETING HER MATCH

"WHY won't you go to New York over Thanksgiving, Leslie?" Doris Monroe's accustomed indifferent drawl quickened to longing exasperation, all but ready to burst bounds.

"Don't choose to," came with laconic self-will from Leslie Cairns. She cast an insolent, inquiring glance toward Doris who was busy driving the white car which Leslie had named the Dazzler and loaned Doris for her own use. The pretty sophomore's injured expression brought a faintly mocking smile to Leslie's loose-lipped mouth.

"Oh, I know you don't choose to," declared Doris in a purposely weary tone. She continued to keep her eyes steadily on the road ahead. "*Why* don't you choose to?" she questioned, growing more pointed.

'You ought to know without asking," Leslie grumbled. "You are just like Natalie Weyman, my New York pal. You can't remember, or be taught

to remember, that business is business. Nat is as crazy to have me go to the Weyman's New York house for Thanksgiving as you are to have me go with you to New York. I can't see either of you when I have so much at stake here."

"I beg your pardon." Doris turned politely chilling. "I had no intention of breaking in upon yours and Miss Weyman's plans." Her coolness arose not from jealousy. Leslie's rebuff had hurt her pride. She had more than once suspected that Leslie's frequent allusions to "my pal, Nat," were made simply to arouse her jealousy.

Doris was too comfortably wrapped up in self to be jealous-hearted. She had a private conviction that a girl who might prefer the friendship of another girl above her own was of small consequence.

Frowning, Leslie shot a second glance at Doris. Her shrewd dark eyes read mainly in Doris's lovely blonde profile supreme discontent at not being able to have her own way.

"You didn't break into anything," Leslie gruffly assured. "That is what you and Nat Weyman seem possessed to try to do, though."

"What do you mean, Leslie?" Doris turned offended eyes for a brief second on her companion.

"I mean you two seem determined to wreck the

promising business career of Leslie Adoré Cairns," Leslie retorted with grim humor.

"Adoré!" Doris exclaimed irrelevantly. "What a darling name!"

"Just suits me, doesn't it?" Leslie threw back her head and indulged in her silent hob-goblin laugh.

"No, it doesn't," Doris said with amazing candor; "but it might."

"What?" For once Leslie's pet monosyllable burst involuntarily from her lips.

"I said it might suit you," calmly returned Doris, "if you would try to make it suit you. You've loads of personality, Leslie; the kind that would make people like you a lot if you cared to have them like you."

"I'm not keen on having people like me, even if I do happen to have a foolish middle name." From interest Leslie's tone had quickly changed to one of mild derision. "I mean I wouldn't lift my finger in order to stand well with a gang of girls. That's the way Bean made herself popular on the campus; pretending to be so kind and helpful; setting up goody-goody standards and poking her inquisitive nose into a lot of things that didn't concern her. Then there was the Beauty contest. She won that. It gave her a strong pull with the upper class girls. All except the Sans." Leslie's displeasure against

Marjorie rose with the recital of past troubles. "They *knew* the judges at the contest hadn't played fairly. Nat Weyman should have won the contest. Wish you'd been a freshie that year. Bean wouldn't have had a look-in."

"Oh, I'm not so sure of that," disagreed Doris, with intent to be provoking. "Miss Dean is really beautiful, Leslie. I'd hate to believe that she is more beautiful than I. Sometimes I'm not sure but that she is," Doris gave a self-conscious, half rueful laugh.

"What ails you?" Leslie demanded darkly. "I thought you said you had no use for Bean and her crowd. Look where you're going. You almost zipped us into that limousine."

Doris's honest, if reluctant, opinion of Marjorie fanned the flame of Leslie's too-ready ill humor. She immediately vented it upon Doris's driving.

"*No,* I did *not* almost run the car into that limousine," was the other girl's flat contradiction. "What is the use in growing peevish with me, Leslie? You know I detest Miss Dean and that Sanford crowd. The only one of them who appears in the least interesting is Miss Harding. She's a barbarian, but she has individuality. I can't forget she's on earth, you know, since I have her as a roommate."

As she spoke Doris had slowed the speed of the car for a stop before the Lotus, the tea room where they had decided to go for a Saturday afternoon luncheon.

"She's a savage; so is Macy." Leslie invariably referred to Muriel and Jerry as "those two savages." "She's clever, too, that Muriel Harding. The Sans would have taken up with her and Macy and Lynde when they came to Hamilton if they hadn't been so crazy about Bean. Macy's father's a millionaire and Lynde's father is a multi-million man. Harding would have got across on her nerve. All three rallied round the Bean standard and lost out with the Sans."

It was on Doris's tongue to say: "Then they were lucky, after all, since the Sans were expelled from college." Instead she held her peace. She intended to try once more to coax Leslie to re-consider her decision not to go to New York. Such a remark from her now about the Sans would only stir Leslie into fresh irritation.

Doris sent a backward, lingering glance toward the shining white car as the two girls started up the wide cement walk to the tea room.

"Don't worry. It'll be there when we come back," Leslie said with a half mollified smile. Doris's proud

anxiety concerning the white car was not lost on her. It suited Leslie to pose as a benefactor.

"It's such a dream," sighed Doris. Her color heightened; her blue eyes shone starry triumph of the smart white roadster.

"I've engaged a Thanksgiving table already at the Colonial," Leslie announced, tucking her arm inside one of Doris's. "I tried to get one at Baretti's but the dago is sore at me. His tables are always engaged beforehand if I happen to want one on a holiday."

"Couldn't we go to New York the day before Thanksgiving and come back to Hamilton the day after?" Doris once more pleaded. "You won't transact any business here on Thanksgiving Day."

"That's what you say," Leslie made instant rejoinder. She laughed as though she was in possession of a rich joke. "I've a special business stunt to put over here on Thanksgiving Day. Get it straight this time, Goldie. I am *not* going to New York."

"Then I shall go there alone." Doris stopped on the threshold of the Lotus. She faced Leslie angrily as she made the stubborn announcement. For an instant the two girls fairly glared at each other.

"Go on inside, for goodness sake," Leslie roughly requested. She had turned incensed eyes from Doris

in time to spy three Hamilton students coming up the walk. Luckily their attention was focussed on the white car. Two of them glanced back at it. It was apparently the topic they were discussing.

"I meant what I said," Doris began haughtily the moment they had seated themselves at a table. "You are so very queer. You seem to forget that I know London and Paris. What is New York to me?" Doris snapped contemptuous fingers. "Merely another large city."

"You'll find it a handful, if you try to tackle it all by your lonesome," was Leslie's satiric prediction.

"I don't need, necessarily, to go there alone. I know two sophs who would be glad—"

"Forget it," Leslie interrupted with a gesture of dismissal. "The three of you would have nothing on 'Babes in the Wood,' or any other of those lost nursery kids. In New York, unless you've been born and brought up there, you have to know the right sort of people, or you can't have a good time. I could give you a letter of introduction to Nat Weyman, if I wanted to, but it wouldn't do. She'd not like you, and you'd not like her."

"I fail to understand why New York should be so—so different from London and Paris." Doris was still haughty, though she was somewhat impressed

by what Leslie had just said. "I don't wish to meet Miss Weyman."

"Use your brain," Leslie impatiently advised. "London and Paris are like a couple of villages to you because you know 'em. New York would be a howling wilderness to you. Why? Because you don't know it. Simmer down, Goldie. I'll take you to New York with me the week after Christmas. Our town house is closed this winter but I have an apartment in New York and a chaperon whom I've taught to mind her own business. You can help me here a good deal on Thanksgiving Day by wearing that new costume of yours that matches the Dazzler. I want to make a splurge at the Colonial, for reasons of my own."

"Of course I wish to help you, Leslie." Doris was somewhat mollified by the Christmas prospect. She flushed hotly at Leslie's pointed reminder concerning her new costume and the car. Leslie had presented her with the white fur hat and coat, an exquisite white silk gold-embroidered gown and slippers and hose which made up the "costume."

"Then look pleasant, and listen to me," Leslie curtly directed her eyes fixed on the other girl's rapidly clearing features. "Drive the Dazzler to the Hamilton House for me at exactly eleven o'clock, on Thanksgiving Day. We'll go for a drive and stop

at the Colonial at two o'clock for dinner. After dinner we'll go for another drive. Then back to supper at the Colonial. There's a good movie theatre in Hamilton. We might go to it in the evening. You can easily run up to the campus and put the car away before the ten-thirty bell rings."

"Why not go to Orchard Inn for supper instead of the Colonial? Since there's been so little snow the roads are fine." Doris made a last desperate effort to have matters arranged partly as she wished.

"Too far away from the campus. My main idea is to be seen with you in all your glory on Gobbler Day. I shan't tell you why. Don't ask me. You've said you wanted to help me. Prove it by doing just as I tell you when I ask you to do something for me." Leslie leaned back in her chair and surveyed Doris with the air of a dictator. She was giving a faithful imitation of a favorite pose of her father.

"Very well." Doris relasped into displeased silence. She allowed Leslie to order the luncheon and continued mute after the waitress had left them.

Leslie pretended not to notice Doris's frigidity. She busied herself with the menu, hunting a dessert to her taste. When she had selected it she cast the card on the table with impatient force.

"Don't meet me at all Thanksgiving Day, if it will be too much of a strain," she sarcastically told

Doris. She knew that Doris was too deeply obligated to her to make such a course of action probable.

Doris viewed her with the cold, measuring glance which Leslie had more than once privately admired in Goldie.

"I don't mind meeting you and doing as you ask me Thanksgiving Day, Leslie," she said coolly. "What I do mind is your dictatorial manner. And sometimes you're really insulting."

"Can't help it. That's the way my father is, and *that's the way I'd rather be.* You said I could make people like me if I tried. I wouldn't try. I'd rather have power; the kind that would make people do as I said because they were afraid of me; afraid to do anything different. That's the kind my father has. He's a great financier. Of course his money has helped him climb to where he is, but he has an iron-strong will. His father left him a fortune, but he's made millions of dollars since then."

Leslie's voice vibrated with melancholly pride as she poured forth this praise of her father. She had not told Doris of her estrangement from him, nor did she purpose to tell her. She had long since arrived at the conclusion that her father was not indifferent to her welfare. Mrs. Gaylord had, in a fit of confidence, admitted to Leslie that she had been engaged by Mr. Cairns to chaperon her. Ac-

cordingly the two had come to amicable terms. Mrs. Gaylord had amiably consented to go visiting among her many friends and relatives a large share of the time, thus leaving Leslie free to her own devices. She had seen Leslie established in Hamilton at the Hamilton House, had remained with her a week and gone on to visit a friend with the usual understanding that the receipt of a telegram from Leslie would insure her immediate return.

"I should think you'd rather be in New York in business so that your father could help you, since he's such a wonderful financier." Doris's practical and wholly innocent observation raised the red of embarrassment in Leslie's dark face.

"My father is—" Leslie fought down the confusion into which her companion's remark had thrown her. "Didn't you hear me say our town house was closed?" she asked grumpily. "My father's in Europe just now. Besides, this garage business I'm in is to be a surprise for him. When he finds I've made good he'll be ready to let me into some of his high finance deals."

Leslie's pet dream was re-instatement into her father's favor as a result of her own daring brilliancy in business. Aside from the pleasure of "making things hum for Bean" she thought well of her garage project. It was the first step upward

in the business career she had set her heart upon.

"There's something I want you to do for me—not later than tomorrow," Leslie dictated, regardless of Doris's protest against her dictatorial manner.

"What is it?" Doris again turned her measuring glance upon Leslie.

"I want you to find out whether Bean's going off the campus for Thanksgiving. I must know. Find out the same about Page, too." Leslie's rugged features were set with dogged purpose. Her usually loose lips were now formed into a tight line.

"I'm not certain I can find that out by tomorrow. I may not be able to let you know before next Tuesday," Doris replied with dignity. "Miss Page's and Miss Dean's friends are not mine," she reminded with irony.

"That need make no difference. It's important to me to know." Leslie tapped on the table with an authoritative index finger in further emphasis of each word. "You promised to help me, Goldie. Is this the way you keep your promise? And with all I've done for you!"

"Don't be so silly, Leslie. I'm not in the least afraid of you. You can't bully me even a tiny bit. I told you I'd help you, and I will. But you must allow me to use my own judgment in some things. If that doesn't please you, take back all you've given

me. I can get along nicely without your further help. I don't fancy gifts that have strings attached to them." Doris elevated her chin to a haughty angle.

Leslie's face lost its tensity and registered half a dozen varied expressions while Doris was announcing her declaration of independence. At the last a look of glum perplexity replaced the others. While she had been leader of the Sans at Hamilton she had had many altercations with her chums. She had never taken their angry protests against her tyranny seriously. No one of them had actually defied her except Dulcie Vale, and she had "begun" on Dulcie.

Face to face with a girl who coolly ordered her not to be "silly," and declined to be bound by obligation further than she chose Leslie had received the surprise of her life.

"Let me know as soon as you can. Phone me at the hotel and I'll meet you." The dessert she had ordered, untouched, Leslie rose from her chair. She had determined to show Doris that she was deeply offended.

Without saying good-bye she stalked sulkily from the tea room. On her way to the door she demanded the check from the waitress and stopped at the desk to pay it. She half hoped Doris would hurry after

her and beg her to go back. Instead Doris sat tranquilly at the table Leslie had quitted and enjoyed her dessert of Nesselrode pudding. For once Leslie had met her match.

CHAPTER X.

PLANNING FOR THANKSGIVING

"TRULY, Robin, it is so selfish in me to be going home and leaving so much for you to do." Marjorie surveyed Robin Page with a troubled, conscience-stricken air indicative of her feelings.

"Oh, shucks!" exclaimed Robin blithely as she glanced up at Marjorie from a list she was busily compiling. "Go home to Castle Dean and forget for four days that Hamilton is on the map. Don't be so conceited. We can get along beautifully without you," she teased. "Phil, Anna Towne, Barbara and I are a splendiferous combination. You'll hardly be missed."

"I don't doubt that." A good-humored smile touched Marjorie's rosy lips. "I know things will run along on wheels. What I'm thinking of is the amount of extra effort your splendiferous combination will have to make. You see I'm taking with me not only the Sanfordites but Leila, Vera and Kathie as well. That leaves you and Lillian, the

only original Travelers to keep the new Nineteen Travelers going and manage the different stunts."

"Most of the stunts we've planned will manage themselves," was Robin's confident assurance. "Remember they are already planned and you did a large share of the planning. So you see you haven't been so much of a quitter as you seem to think."

"You're a perfect partner, Page," Marjorie looked heart-felt appreciation of the charming, boyish-faced girl who had never failed her since the two had joined forces for democracy.

"Glad you like me, Dean." Robin answered the look with her bright, piquant smile. It amused the two to address each other occasionally by their family names. "Listen now while I read you the program I've jotted down."

"Go ahead." Marjorie hurriedly finished strapping the suitcase she had just packed and seated herself in a chair to listen.

It was Wednesday morning. She and Robin had respectively cut chemistry and philology for the purpose of completing the Thanksgiving program to be carried out on the campus during Marjorie's and her chums absence by Robin, with the assistance of Barbara Severn, Phyllis Moore and Anne Towne, leader of the dormitory girls.

"Tonight we've left free to the students to get

up their own jollifications," Robin proceeded. "Most of the girls in the campus houses have spreads, dinners, etc., planned for this evening. The dormitory girls, as you know, are going to take in that illustrated lecture on the South Sea Islands at the Hamilton Theatre. Tomorrow morning there is to be a special service in chapel. I'm going to sing a solo. So is Blanche Scott."

"Oh, Marjorie cried out in delight. "You never told me Blanche Scott was coming to Hamilton. "How I'd love to see her."

"You'll see her when you come back," Robin assured. "I've beeen keeping her coming as a surprise for you. She's going to be at Silverton Hall for two or three weeks after Thanksgiving. She promised me this visit last summer. She's to be married in April, you know."

"I received her bethrothal announcement and that of one of my oldest Sanford chums on the same day last summer. My Sanford chum, Irma Linton, is to be married at Easter time. She is the girl who I used to tell you Elaine Hunter was like," commented Marjorie. "Blanche and Elaine two loyal Silvertonites now on the road to matrimony," she added musingly.

"Yes; and Portia Graham is a third. She won't care if *you* know it, Marvelous Manager. She's en-

gaged to a doctor. She 'fessed up in one of her latest letters to me. But this isn't on our regular program." Robin again fell to consulting the list she had written.

"Next comes the dinner at Baretti's for the dormitory girls. He hasn't told us yet what it will cost, but—"

"Oh, goodness!" Marjorie bobbed up from her chair with the suddenness of a jack-in-the-box. "I had so much to talk over with you I almost forgot to show you Signor Baretti's note. It came this morning. She glanced anxiously toward the wall clock. "He wants to see us at twelve today."

"I wonder why?" Robin appeared a trifle startled. "I hope our Thanksgiving dinner arrangement with him isn't going to flivver."

"He won't fail us, I'm sure. Very likely it's the cost of the dinner he wishes to discuss with us. Such a funny little note." She produced the Italian's letter from the top of her chiffonier and handed it to Robin. The latter read aloud with amused emphasis:

"DEAR MISS DEAN:

"You pleas come to my restaurant at twelva the clock befor afernoon on Wenesda. you tell Miss

Page come to. I am not smart to write much. you please come here I tell you evrythin.

"Your frien,

"GUISEPPE BARETTI."

"All right, Guiseppe, we'll be there at twelve," smiled Robin as she returned the letter to Marjorie. "I'll go over the rest of this now, in, a hurry. This will be our only chance. We'll bump into all our friends, once we're out on the campus. Any of them we don't happen to meet there will probably appear at the inn.

"Too true, Page; too true." Marjorie agreed with a rueful shake of her curly head.

"Phil has managed to get up a basket ball game for Thanksgiving afternoon between two picked teams, regardless of class. It's to be held in the gym, beginning at three-thirty. She has had her hands full, making up the right sort of teams. Gussie Forbes is going to play center on one team. Miss Walker is to play center on the other team. What do you think of that?" Robin cast an inquiring look at Marjorie. She added, without waiting for answer. "Phil had to arrange matters so in fairness to Miss Walker. She is as fine a player as Gus."

"Phil is the goddess of fair play." Warm ad-

miration for invincible Phil lighted Marjorie's features. "It will do Gussie and Miss Walker good to be pitted against each other. Each may discover something to admire in the other before the game ends. It was a bold stroke; but exactly like Phil to do it."

"She says it will turn out for the best. Here we are stopping to talk again. Hm-m-m!" Robin importantly cleared her throat and went on. "The dormitory girls are going to be hostesses at a dance it the gym on Thanksgiving night. You know all about that, so I won't have to stop to explain. The rest of this list is made up of the stunts we've already planned. As soon as we've seen Baretti I'm going to hurry to Silverton Hall and letter a large card of announcement to put in the main bulletin board."

Marjorie and Robin had been planning for two weeks a series of amusements to be given during the holiday for the benefit of the students left on the campus. There were to be paper chases and outdoor gypsyings on Friday and Saturday if the weather was fine. The Travelers, nineteen, new, and two, original, were to divide themselves into seven groups, three in a group, and head the various picnickings to be held at different points of the country surrounding Hamilton College. Campfires

were to be built for the purpose of roasting eggs, potatoes and chestnuts. Bacon and marshmallows were to be toasted over the flames on sticks, and coffee was to be made, the favorite campfire elixir the world over.

In case of a storm-bound Friday and Saturday a variety of campus-house amusements would take the place of the outdoor jaunts. Each campus house contingent had pledged itself to get up an impromptu entertainment on short notice, if needed, for the amusement of its own household and that of the off-campus students. Robin and Phil had arranged a concert for Friday evening in the gymnasium at which to introduce a number of talented girls who had been shyly lingering in the background.

Saturday evening there was to be an old-fashioned costume party in the gymnasium to which the whole college was invited. While the weather had been moderately cold with brisk winds and no snow the Travelers had plans made for coasting and skating fun should a swift freezing change accompanied by enough snow visit the campus.

It has taken diplomatic work to enlist the campus houses in the entertainment campaign. There was a certain amount of ill-feeling in all of them toward the post graduates. This was the result largely

of the two sophomore factions whose idols were respectively Doris Monroe and Augusta Forbes. Only the double fact that they could not go home for Thanksgiving and the inborn love of girlhood to get up shows and "be in things" made Marjorie's and Robin's plans possible. Even haughty Doris Monroe was looking complacently forward to playing the leading part in a sketch which no less person than gloomy-visaged Miss Peyton had written.

Ronny had quietly taken upon herself the furnishing of the orchestra and a buffet collation of sweets, fruit punch and ices for the dormitory girls' dance. The old-fashioned hop on Saturday evening was a half-dollar donation party, for the benefit of the Hamilton poor families. Phil's own orchestra would furnish the music. There would be fruit lemonade only by way of refreshment. The admission fee was to be dropped into a box with a slitted cover as the guests entered the ball room. The box was to be in charge of a maid of long ago.

Thus it befell that Marjorie discovered the very opportunity for which she had been waiting. Doris Monroe, attired in a sleeveless, high-waisted gown of baby blue, her golden hair massed high on her lovely head would constitute a perfect custodian of

the precious box. After due consultation Page and Dean decided that Lillian Wenderblatt should be chosen to tackle the delicate task of asking the haughty sophomore to deign to make herself useful at the hop.

"We've certainly done good work on that Thanksgiving program," Robin congratulated as the two girls presently left Wayland Hall to make their call upon Baretti. "The best part of it is we've provided entertainment for either good weather or bad. We're becoming invincible. Nothing can stop Page and Dean from "carrying on." She laughed at her own jesting conceit.

Marjorie smiled in sympathy of Robin's optimistic view. "It looks to me as though it might rain before night," she predicted, scanning the gray masses of clouds beginning to roll up in the west. "I hope those clouds mean snow instead of rain. It's hardly cold enough for snow. Anything but a rainy Thanksgiving! Thanks to *you,* Robin Page, we can discount the rain on the campus, if it should come. You've done a good deal more than I on the program. And see how I'm going to leave you in the lurch," she added lightly.

"I've *not* done more on the program than you, and your presence will hang over the campus

whether you're here or not," Robin said with positiveness. "In time to come the Page part of the firm of Page and Dean may be forgotten, but the Dean part; never."

CHAPTER XI.

A FRIEND INDEED

It was precisely noon when the partners entered the inn. The somber beauty of the great square room always seemed to Marjorie to be more like a continuation of Hamilton Arms than a restaurant.

"You are here on the time, Miss Dean, Miss Page." The friendly Italian proprietor of the inn had been watching for them. He trotted forward, his hand outstretched. "I write you the letter, then I afraid mebbe you go home early thisa morn. You don't get it. Then think, no—you don't go home when you give the dorm girls the dinner."

"I am going home, Signor Baretti, but Miss Page is going to remain on the campus. Several of the girls with whom you see us generally are going home, too. Miss Moore and Miss Severn are to help Miss Page with the Thanksgiving dinner for the dormitory girls." Marjorie smiled her regard for the kindly little man as she made this explanation.

"Ah, yes;" nodded the Italian. "Now you sit down; have the lunch with me. It is ready; very special; all for you." He conducted them to one of the tables and bowed them into their chairs. "You are please have the lunch with such a nobody Italiano?" he asked jokingly. There was, however a touch of embarrassment in the inquiry.

The instant warm affirmative from his guests seemed to delight him immensely. He signaled to the Italian waitress who had been hovering near waiting for his order. She nodded and hurried from the room returning quickly with the soup.

"Now I tell you," he said as they began the soup. "You know I like the dorm you build. I give this dorm a good present someday when I see what the dorm need much. I know you want give the college young ladies who used live where the dorm is the good time. I know they don't have the mona; not much." He pursed his lips and shook his head in regret of the dormitory girls' moneyless estate. "You are the ones to make these happa, because you do good for these. I am this to make them happa, too. They don't pay for the Thanksigivin' dinner. You don't pay. I give the dorm girls the dinner. Then I am happa. It will be the fine dinner. You do this for me. You tell the dorm young ladies come to the dinner at one. I don't

close my restaurant, but I have only enough tables for the dorm girls. I have already tell those freshmans, sophmans and studen's they can reserve the tables only after half past two of the clock. They come here before, they must sit on the benches an' watch the dorms eat." His eyes twinkled humorously as he sketched this dire prospect for the girls who were pluming themselves upon having reserved tables at Baretti's.

Marjorie and Robin could not refrain from laughing at his revelation. They could picture the rows of exclusive but certain-to-be-very-hungry girls meekly sitting watching the dormitory girls eat up the turkey for which they were yearning. The pure democracy of the Italian's plan robbed them both temporarily of ready acknowledgment of his generosity.

"I don't know what to say. I'm simply flabbergasted!" Robin finally exclaimed.

"You don't like?" The little man glanced anxiously from one girl to the other. I don't un'erstan' that word flab—flab—." He gave a half puzzled, half smiling shake of the head.

"Indeed we do like your plan. By flabbergasted I mean that I am so surprised and delighted. I'll say the word slowly for you." Robin pronounced it by syllables.

"So-o-o. I listen." He made Robin say it over several times. "It is a long word. I like the long words in American." He repeated the word until he appeared to know it.

Marjorie had a shrewd suspicion that he had seized upon the strange word as a means of hiding his embarrassment at his own generosity.

"What you think, Miss Dean?" He suddenly fixed a pair of penetrating black eyes upon her. "You like, too?"

"Like your plan? I should say I did." Marjorie bent her friendliest smile upon the devoted adherent of the dormitory cause.

"You couldn't do anything that would bring more happiness to the off-campus girls, Signor Baretti," Robin told him. "They will feel so proud and happy to be invited by you to a private Thanksgiving dinner. But you mustn't forget the campus girls. You know your restaurant is the Hamilton girls' favorite tea room. "I simply have to put in a good word for them, too," she ended loyally.

"Yes, yes; I un'erstan.' I know what you mean," the Italian assured. "Oo-oo, many nice studen's come here, don't go another tea shop. All the rest of the day after half past two is for them. My ten tables are all reserve for after the dorm dinner. In my restaurant I can put more tables. That is

no good. Some studen's come here I don't like. They eat here same time as dorm girls maybe they make the trouble. Miss Car-rins ask me for the Thanksgivin' table. I don't give her one." He waved a prohibitive finger in the air. "She can start the trouble from nothin'. You know now she lives in the town?"

"Yes, we know it," Marjorie's response came in even tones. "Her business interests keep her in Hamilton, I believe."

"Her business is too much to mind the business of others." A fleeting scowl passed over the Italian's forehead. It lingered between his brows as he said resentfully: "Once this Miss Car-rins say about me when she is here in this room but verra mad at me: 'Let the dago have his hash house. I hope it burn down tonight.' Never-r-r I forget that. I feel to say to her when she come here again after long while: 'You don't come here more.' I cannot. This is the inn; for everybody who want come who behave quiet. But never-r-r I let her have the special table. Naw!" The inn keeper put great stress upon this resentful resolve.

Neither Marjorie nor Robin hardly knew what to say. They had long since heard the story Baretti had just told them from Vera.

"I wouldn't take anything Leslie Cairns said to

heart, or ever let it worry me for a minute, Signor Baretti," Marjorie finally said in soothing tones. She recognized the Italian's right to comforting words. She knew he could not forgive having been called a "dago." Far more humiliating it must then be to his pride to have heard his beloved restaurant dubbed a "hash house."

"I think mebbe I don't," Baretti decided, his brooding features brightening again. "Anyway I don't have Miss Car-rins here when are the dorm girls here. She might act verra mean. So some freshmans and sophmans who have the tables here will act mean, too. Miss Car-rins don't like those who have no much mona. If she come here with the pretty girl who have the proud face and the hair of gold I don't say nothin'. She can sty unless she makes the fun of me. She shall no do that. It is my hash house." He threw back his head and laughed. "In it I can do the way I please. So Miss Car-rins come here someday, make the fun of me again, I walk up to her, take her by the arm, very quiet, and make her to walk out the door."

CHAPTER XII.

PAGE MINUS DEAN

THANKSGIVING DAY dawned without the tiniest streak of sunlight to grace it. Early in the morning heavily overcasted clouds began emptying their cold dispiriting torrents of rain upon a brown and soggy earth.

Safe within the cheerful walls of Castle Dean Marjorie's delight in being at home was dampened by the thought of how Robin Page and her volunteer entertainment committee were battling against such a dreary day. She could only hope that the steady persistency of the Sanford downpour was not repeating itself at Hamilton. True she and Robin had planned their program to cover that possible calamity. Bad weather could not fail to make it harder for Robin, Phil and Barbara to keep things moving with the energy and smoothness so necessary as a means toward uniting the interests and the sympathies of the students of the various campus houses with those of the dormitory girls.

While Marjorie, Leila, Vera and Jerry were cosily ensconced in the Deans' living room lamenting over the bad weather, Robin Page, Phil Moore and Barbara Severn were holding a serious consultation of three in Robin's room.

"It's after ten o'clock now Phil," Robin was saying. "Really, I think I'd better brave the rain, go over to the garage and run Vera's car into town. Anna said yesterday that there were only two busses running on the new bus line. There were three, but one has been taken away to another route. Seventy-two girls will crowd two busses. Suppose anything should happen to either of the two? I told Anna to get the crowd to the inn by half past twelve. It will take longer to run out from town in the pouring rain. We mustn't be a minute late at the inn."

"I'm very well aware of that, sweet coz," Phil returned in her bantering fashion. "Far be it from me to allow the gang to be late and disarrange the well-laid plans of Guiseppe."

"If you intend to paddle out in this deluge and play duck, count me in, Barbara made valiant announcement.

"You can't lose me, either," Phil decided. "Slave, bring me my raincoat, my faithful Tam and my goloshes! Out in the tempest I must go!" She

struck a dramatic posture, held it a moment, then said disappointedly: "I fail to see anyone around here who answers to the name of slave. I'll have to be it myself."

Ten minutes later the three, with raincoats buttoned to the chin, caps drawn low, high-buckled goloshes on their feet, the largest umbrellas they could find over their heads, were plodding through the rain to the garage which housed Vera's car. The latter had urged Robin to make use of it during her absence. Leila's, unfortunately, was laid up for repairs.

"Some of the dormitory girls were going to walk to the campus today. Just imagine!" Phil said ironically to Barbara. The two, seated in the tonneau of the car, watched the drenched landscape through the half-opened curtains as the machine fled along the pike.

"Wade would be more appropriate," laughed Barbara. "But they've changed their minds long before now. Deliver me from any more walks in this flood. I don't envy Robin her job of chauffeur."

"We're making good time." Phil inspected her wrist watch with a satisfied nod. "We ought to be at the place on Linden Avenue where the busses make their stand by ten minutes past eleven. What

time are the dormitory girls to be at the stand?" She leaned forward and called out her question in Robin's ear.

"Half past eleven," Robin raised her voice above the beat of the pelting rain, but did not turn her head.

"They'll have to mob the corner drug store nearest the stand. They can't stay out on the walk with the rain coming down in cataracts," commented Phil. "Anna Towne can be depended upon to have them at the bus stand on time. Such a horrible flivver for a holiday! I don't dare stop to think of it," she grumbled.

Her guess regarding their speedy arrival at the bus stand was an accurate one. It was precisely ten minutes past eleven when Robin brought the car to a stop before the drug store. The rain was still driving down in misty sheets as the trio emerged from the automobile and made a frantic dash across the sidewalk to the shelter of the drug store. Immediately afterward Anna Towne and half a dozen of her intimate friends arrived, radiant-faced in spite of the storm.

"This *is* a surprise," Anna greeted. She shook hands with the three hardy Travelers as though it had been a long time instead of only yesterday since she had seen them. "The rest of the crowd

will soon be here. I managed to telephone all of them this morning to be at the stand at eleven-fifteen instead of eleven-thirty. Then we'll surely be ready to start at exactly eleven-thirty. The bus drivers are so disobliging. They are hired specially to bring us to and from the campus yet they never want to wait a second beyond a certain time for us to assemble. They're not supposed to carry any passengers but us during those trips. But they do. I say this, not by way of complaining, Robin, I object to their unfairness. A great difference between those Italians and Signor Baretti, isn't there? I think he is wonderfully kind to remember the off-campus girls in such a generous way." Anna's pale, interesting face brightened with appreciation.

"Signor Baretti has true college spirit," Robin returned with conviction. "I can't imagine those two grumpy bus drivers as imbued with any such noble quality; or that Italian, Sabani, the man they work for. If those two kickers show any signs of grouchiness this morning I shall read them a Thanksgiving lecture. It won't be the kind to feel thankful for, either. By the way, where are they? I ordered them to be here at eleven and stay here until told to start for the inn."

Involuntarily the group of girls moved nearer one of the huge plate-glass show windows to peer,

bright-eyed, into the rain-swept street. As far as they could see, up and down the street, there were no signs of the large dark red busses with their flashy yellow trimmings.

"It's eighteen minutes past eleven," Phil's tones conveyed her consternation. "Where *can* those aggravating busses be?"

"Not where they should be," scolded Robin. "Here comes a big crowd of the girls. The busses should be here so that they could step directly into them. They'll have to come into the drug store instead. Maybe the druggist will object to sheltering us. There'll be enough dripping umbrellas to flood the store. Oh, dear what a mess! Why did it have to go and rain on Thanksgiving Day? And where, oh, where, are those miserable drivers and their busses?"

CHAPTER XIII

AN EMERGENCY CALL

MINDFUL of past liberal patronage of the Hamilton College girl and with a shrewed eye to the future the druggist himself ushered the arriving party of merry girls into the store and obligingly supplied a couple of large packing boxes in which to stand the dripping umbrellas. Despite Robin's despairing opinion that the store would not hold the umbrella-laden brigade they managed to crowd into it.

By eleven-thirty the last girl had arrived at the rendezvous. They were a cheery, light-hearted, buoyant company regardless of their cramped quarters. Their appreciation of Signor Baretti's invitation to be his guests at a Thanksgiving dinner showed itself in their bright faces, spontaneous laughter and gay holiday air.

"It's one minute past eleven-thirty, and no busses. I'm going to find out what is the matter." Robin made the low-toned announcement to Phil and Bar-

bara with an air of desperation. "I'm going to 'phone Sabini's garage where the busses are kept. I can't imagine what can have happened to make them late. I wish you two would keep a sharp lookout for them. If they should come while I am 'phoning you can hurry back to the 'phone booth and let me know."

"Suppose they shouldn't come. What then?" Barbara regarded Robin with lively apprehension.

"Don't ask me." Robin raised a hand as though to ward off such a catastrophe. "Let's not suppose anything quite so harrowing," she added in a more hopeful tone.

Ten minutes later she emerged hastily from the telephone booth. Her expression was one of acute dismay. She made hurried way, in and out among the crowded company of girls, to where Phil and Barbara were anxiously keeping up a watch at one of the big front windows.

"One of the busses has broken down!" she cried excitedly. "The other bus is out somewhere. The man at the garage who answered me doesn't know where. I tried to hire cars from the garage. There are *none* to be had. How are we going to land the dormitory girls at Baretti's by one? And we can't ask Signor Baretti to serve the dinner later!"

"What an *awful* state of affairs!" Barbara echoed

Robin's consternation. "We'll have to do something very suddenly to offset it. What about hiring the station taxicabs; all of them, if we can get them." was her quick suggestion.

"We might do that," Phil hailed the idea eagerly. "There are five or six of them. With our car and Lillian Wenderblatt's we could carry the gang to the inn at one trip. Go ahead, Robin, and 'phone Mariani's garage. I'll 'phone Lillian."

"You're a wonder and a comfort to my distracted old age, Phil." Robin showed grateful relief. "Watch me start on the trail of those taxies. Never mind the expense." She darted back to the telephone booth she had recently left. Phil followed her; slipped into an adjoining booth and proceeded to call Lillian Wenderblatt on the telephone.

Among the waiting company of girls a loud buzz of dismayed conversation had now risen concerning the non-appearance of the busses. Anna Towne, Florence Wyatt and Marian Barth, seniors and members of the new Travelers' sorority, were anxiously discussing the situation with a group of their particular friends.

At least a third of the off-campus students who had lived in the old houses, which had been demolished to make place for the dormitory, now

in process of building, were seniors. While they, with the students of the lower classes, had been familiarly termed by the Travelers among themselves as the "dormitory girls," they hardly hoped to have the pleasure of living even a few weeks in the dormitory before their graduation from college. Far from being disappointed at this prospect they did not stop to consider themselves but showed only the utmost satisfaction in the good fortune which would fall to the other two-thirds of the off-campus contingent.

In themselves the dormitory girls were the finest student element at Hamilton. Originally brought together, and gradually welded into a congenial, self-governing body by the efforts of Marjorie, Robin and the Travelers, these earnest, capable girls were daily living up to the Hymn to Hamilton.

As president of the senior class sunny-faced, easy-going Phil Moore was their idol, Barbara, as her chum and intrepid co-worker, was hardly less worshiped. The moment Barbara left Phil to make her way back to the window she was eagerly surrounded and plied with concerned questions.

"Don't give up this ship, children," she gaily declared, raising her voice above the flood of questions which assailed her. "Robin is 'phoning for taxis from the station and Phil is 'phoning for

Miss Wenderblatt and her car. We shall manage O. K. without the busses."

Barbara's assurances were received with jubilant cries of acclamation from the effervescently happy girls. While she was in the midst of them she happened to glance toward the back of the store. Phil was just emerging from the 'phone booth a pleased smile on her face. She paused before the booth which held Robin and peered in through the glass panel. Robin was still busy 'phoning, it appeared. Phil turned, saw Barbara looking toward her and waved a re-assuring hand. It signified that her part of the telephoning had been successful.

A false alarm of: "Here comes a bus!" caused a surging of the crowd to the window. Through the rain a large dark red milk truck had been mistaken for one of the busses. When Barbara finally turned away from the window it was to find Phil and Robin beside her. Phil was no longer smiling. Her blue eyes were full of resentment. Robin's face was a mixture of dismay, indignation and perplexity.

"What do you think?" she blazed forth to Barbara. "That miserable Mariani person won't let us have a single taxi! He claims they are all in use and will be the rest of the day. He was so hateful to me. He asked me very sarcastically why we did

not use the busses today since we used them every other day instead of his taxicabs."

"We certainly are in a pickle. Uh-h-h." Barbara simulated collapse. "I'd forgotten all about it, but someone told me long ago that those two Italians, Mariani and Sabani have been at daggers drawn for years. Sabani once had the station jitneys, and all to himself. Then came Tony Mariani with a better looking lot of cars, and ran Sabani out. Then Sabani built a garage and ran that, but he swore never to accommodate anyone who patronized Mariani. The bus line belongs to Sabani. I suppose he has registered the same vow against Mariani."

"Then we might as well count them both out," was Robin's dispirited ultimatum. "Did you ever know worse luck? To have all our plans upset because a couple of Italianos are ready to swear a vendetta!"

"If only we could capture a truck. I'd drive it myself," Phil valiantly declared. "But it's a holiday," she added with a hopeless shrug of her shoulders.

"That milk truck is the only one I've seen today," said Barbara mournfully.

"We'll have to deliver the guests to Baretti in private cars," was Robin's undaunted decision.

"'Thus far we have two; ours, and Lillian's is likely to be here any minute. I'll start at once with seven girls. You two stay here and start Lillian's car back with seven more the instant she comes. It's twelve o'clock now. We have exactly one hour. Phone Gussie Forbes and Calista Wilmot. They both have cars. They will help us out. So will Laura Mead and Norma Buchanan. I almost forgot our new Travelers. If those four girls can make one trip apiece, each taking seven or eight girls to a car, Lillian and I can make a trip and a half apiece in an hour. We simply must."

To think was to act with Robin. She had hardly finished sketching her plan to her chums before she had begun to marshall seven of the dormitory girls to the door.

"Follow me," she laughingly directed. "I'm going to make a rapid sprint for my car. You do the same. Never mind your umbrellas. You've not time to hunt them out now. I'll bring them to the campus later in the car."

Across the walk she dashed, an intrepid little leader, and opened the door of the car nearest to her. Her followers, close at her heels, merrily stowed themselves into the automobile. A moment or two and Robin was in the seat and had started the car.

The palm-screened window of a florist's shop across the street afforded an excellent view of Robin and her party of girls to an interested spectator. Leslie Cairns had gone to the pains of donning leather coat, knickers, rubber hood and high-laced boots, and actually walking in the downpour from the Hamilton House to the florist's shop opposite the bus stand. Her idea was not that of taking a rainy-day constitutional. Leslie had posted herself behind the barrier of leafy green for the express purpose of watching the working out of a little plan of her own.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WILL AND THE WAY

WHILE Phil hastily telephoned Wayland Hall and sent out her emergency call for Gussie and Calista, Barbara busied herself with getting into communication with Laura Mead and Norma Buchanan of Silverton Hall. Anna Towne had been posted to watch at the window for Lillian. The latter arrived shortly after Robin had gone. She quickly took on her load of passengers and whizzed off as speedily as she had come.

Arrived at the inn with her first installment of guests. Robin found Signor Baretti a most sympathetic listener to the report of the calamity which had overtaken the off-campus girls. Mindful of the fact that the nationality of the two warring garage proprietors was the same as Baretti's she made her report a strictly impersonal one.

"This is no way for Mariani an' Sabani to do. Verra bad," was the little proprietor's wrathful criticism of his countrymen. "I know these verra

well. They are the Italianos. But they are not much good. They are too craza get the money. Each steal the business of the other. To get mad at the people; that is the verra bad business. The people don't ride, Sabani an' Mariani get no mona."

"It was very bad business for us," Robin assured him with a rueful smile. "I think now that we'll be able to bring the girls to the inn almost on time. We can't avoid being a little late."

"You don't speak of that. It is the all right," protested Baretti.

"Thank you so much, Signor Baretti. But we *must not* delay your Thanksgiving arrangements." Robin made a movement as though about to depart.

"You listen one minute." Up went one of the Italian's hands for attention. "You don't worry about nothin', Miss Page. Your frien's come pretty soon in the cars with the dorm girls. The dinner is a little late, I don't care. These frien's who have the cars take the dorm girls to town, to the campus, all the day when they need to go?"

"Yes, the same girls will help us if they haven't any special engagements for the afternoon and evening. The dormitory girls are to see the basket ball game in the gym this afternoon. Then they have to go to town to get ready for a dance in the gym this evening. After the dance they must

be taken back to town again. We don't wish to disappoint them if we can help it." A worried pucker appeared on Robin's white forehead.

"I know what I do." Baretti treated Robin to a brilliantly encouraging smile. She had never before seen him look so utterly genial. "You wait—you see." He nodded at her mysteriously.

"You've done so much for us already," she demurred, answering the smile with her own charming one.

"I do more," he promised heartily. He trotted along at her side as she hurried to the door, repeatedly assuring her of his help.

Robin had sprung hastily into her car and headed it for the town of Hamilton when Lillian Wenderblatt drove up with a second load of girls.

"Hurray! Never say die!" Lillian hailed triumphantly. "We're here, because we're here!"

The girls in the car took up the cry and shouted it joyfully.

"You made quick time," Robin said to Lillian with grateful warmth. "Gussie, Calista, Laura Mead and Norma Buchanan have been phoned for. Phil and Barbara are at that end of the job. Did you meet any of our rescue motorists on the way?"

Yes; I passed Gus and Calista not far from the Arms. They were speeding along, splashing up the

water like sixty. They were having a race to see which one could keep in the lead."

"Thank goodness for such glorious news!" exclaimed Robin energetically. "Do you mind making another trip, Lillian?"

"I'd love to. I'll dump my cargo of dorms, as our friend Guiseppe likes to call 'em, instanter. Then I'll beat you back to town."

"Oh, no you won't. Good-bye. I haven't time to say much obliged." Robin promptly started her car and sped away through the fine misting rain into which the heavier downpour had at last merged.

"This is one way to spend Thanksgiving," she reflected, a touch of mockery in her smile, as she sent the car ahead at the highest speed she dared employ. "I know three Silvertonites who are going to be away late for dinner at the Hall, too. But it's our traditional obligation to see the dorms within Baretti's hospitable gates first and consider our own turkey dinner last. Just the same I hope there'll be lots of turkey left. I'm so hungry." Robin sighed audibly.

She forgot her hunger when she suddenly spied Gussie and Calista coming up, a pair of highly enthusiastic, if somewhat reckless chauffeurs, each driving a car filled with dinner guests.

"You can always rely on the Bertram Taxi Com-

pany," Gussie called at top voice. She was in the lead and radiant with the opportunity which had fallen to her to make herself useful.

Robin rewarded Gussie with a gay salute. "Seen the others?" she cried.

"Laura and Norma? Met them just as we turned out of Linden Avenue," the reply floated back to Robin's gratified ears.

When within a short distance of the bus stand she had the good luck to encounter Laura and Norma. They had enthusiastically hailed the detail as a fine opportunity to prove *their* mettle as Travelers. They had also pressed Adeline Raymond, another of the new Travelers, into service with her car. Twenty-six passengers made up the jubilant aggregation of the three cars which the trio of Travelers had brought to the emergency.

Robin shouted and waved her encouragement of the overflowing carloads of girls as the machines shot past her own. She did not attempt to stop the three willing drivers who had responded so promptly to the call. She had not more than reached the drug store and sprung from her car when Lillian drove up, laughingly sounding her own praises as a high-speed motorist.

"We have met the obstacle and surmounted it," Phil emphasized her joyful boast with a flourish of

the arm. She and Barbara had rushed out of the drug store at sight of the returned pair of P. G.'s. "Only sixteen more girls to go to the inn. Speed up, and you can get them there by a little after one. Then you can come back for us. I've 'phoned Silverton Hall that we may be late for dinner. It will be all right."

"You're a collection of jewels, all of you." Robin made an affectionately inclusive gesture. "What about Thanksgiving dinner at your house, Lillian?" she turned to her classmate.

"Not until four o'clock. I've barrels of time to squander," Lillian declared extravagantly.

"Come on, friends and fellow-citizens?" Robin was now beckoning briskly to the sixteen girls of the dormitory group who had followed Phil and Barbara outside the store. "Please accept my profound apologies for having to pack you in, eight to a car. It will have to be done."

"Try to regard the experience from the stoical standpoint of a sardine," Phil advised comfortingly, but in a comfortless tone.

Her advice was received with a buzz of retaliating sallies from the giggling aspirants for sardine experience. Neither dark weather nor mishaps can long suppress the exuberant spirit of youth. It bubbles up like a magic spring at the first intima-

tion of trouble ended and good fortune nigh. What might have been a most vexatious disappointment had been averted in the nick of time. In consequence, Baretti's dinner guests were in high feather at the triumph of Robin, Phil and Barbara over calamitous circumstances.

Robin's heart responded to the rollicking happy disturbance the double octette of girls were making as they piled themslves into the two waiting cars. She did not know what the rest of the day might bring forth but she was greatly inspirited by Signor Baretti's promise to help.

"I must hurry away again, Signor Baretti. I must go back to town for Miss Moore and Miss Severn," Robin explained a little later to the Italian as she saw the last of the dormitory girls ushered high and dry into the inn. "I'll stop here on my return trip with the girls' umbrellas. They'll need them when they are ready to go over on the campus. I don't believe it will ever stop raining." Standing in the open door of the inn she made a grimace of mock despair.

"It rain, oh, way late tonight, mebbe," prophesied Baretti. "I have look at the sky verra hard. Well, it is not that much to be sad to me if I have not many more than the dorm girls for the dinner. After the dinner, Pedro, my man, stay here at the

restaurant. I am the one to go to the town and see Sabani. I know him. I speak the verra cross words to him. He knows how I can be verra mad. I make him send the busses to the campus after the *ginnasio* for the dorm girls."

CHAPTER XV.

AN UNEXPECTED SHOWER

It seemed to Robin as though the road between Baretti's and the town of Hamilton was never ending. While she and Marjorie counted the odd little inn-keeper as their friend and a sincere advocate of the dormitory project, she was amazed at this latest proffer of friendship. She had little doubt as to what would be the result of his call upon Sabani, a fat, taciturn fellow with a surly, hang-dog manner. Among the sprinkling of Italians who lived in or near the town of Hamilton, Guiseppe Baretti was held in the light of an uncrowned monarch by his humbler countrymen.

"Baretti's," as his restaurant was familiarly called, had been for years the favorite rendezvous of the students of Hamilton College. Like the inn, its silent, keen-eyed proprietor had found lasting favor with the campus dwellers. From faculty to freshmen the little man was known and liked. His interest in the Travelers and their ambitious plans

for a free dormitory had been awakened on the evening when Marjorie, Robin, Phil and a group of their boon companions had, in a spirit of mischief, serenaded him. Since that memorable evening, when he had entertained them with a story of his own miseries as an emigrant in New York City, his interest in their work and accomplishment had grown greater. The Travelers now numbered him as one of their staunchest allies.

"At last!" Robin exclaimed half aloud as the familiar turn into Linden Avenue appeared, only a few rods ahead. She sent the car fleeing down the wet avenue, bent on reaching the drug store at the earliest moment. She had hardly begun slowing down as the car neared the store when Phil and Barbara issued from it and ran down to the edge of the walk to meet her.

"You made dandy time," Phil called out. "Are you sure you weren't speeding?"

"It seemed as though I'd never reach here," Robin declared. "I spun the car along as fast as I dared. I've come for you and the girls' umbrellas." Robin hopped agilely from the car and landed on the walk between Phil and Barbara. "We must start back in about three minutes. We'll be late for dinner, but not too late. I'm famished. I left Lillian at the inn, starving. She's saving her

appetite for Thankgiving dinner at home, and it won't be served until four o'clock."

The three promoters of happiness swung gaily up the walk, oblivious to the drizzling rain, entered the store and made an energetic onslaught upon the two make-shift racks of damp umbrellas. With the help of the proprietor and a ball of heavy twine the umbrellas were made into several bundles and deposited on the floor of the car. Barbara volunteered to keep them company on the back seat of the machine.

"You may sit on the front seat, Phil. You've something to tell Robin. I resign the place of honor in favor of you. I am too considerate to join the front seat party by sitting on you. I'm going to roost among the bumbershoots." Barbara climbed in among the piles of umbrellas and settled herself cosily on the back seat, her feet tucked under her.

"Roosting among the bumbershoots," laughed Phil. "That sounds almost scientific; as though the bumbershoots might be a species of rare bird, or maybe a savage tribe. Oh, but it's good to be on the move again." She straightened in the seat and drew a deep breath of satisfaction. "Those two hours of watchful waiting that Barbara and I put in will last us for a long time to come. Weary watchful waiters waitfully watching the weather,

We weren't the only waitful watchers, either." Phil's merry tones gave place to a more forceful accent.

"What do you mean, Phil?" Robin cast a quick, side-long glance toward her cousin.

"Leslie Cairns was across the street in the florist's shop watching us. She was standing at the back of the window that had the palms in it. She had on a leather motor coat with a hood. The hood was drawn over her head and she wore knickers and high-laced boots. She looked more like an aviator than a motorist. I happened to get a good view of her. Most of the time she kept out of sight behind the palms. I think she was there for a purpose," was Phil's distrustful surmise.

"Oh, she may only have happened in the shop, either to order flowers or to hunt shelter from the rain," Robin made charitable allowance. "Very likely she has a dinner date with Miss Monroe or one of the Acasia House girls. What possible interest could she have in the dormitory girls? You know what a snob she used to be. I daresay she hasn't changed."

"She has nerve," grumbled Phil who had always detested Leslie Cairns with the full strength of her democratic soul. "If I had been expelled from Hamilton, even unjustly, I'd never set foot on the

campus again. The idea of trying to gain a social footing on Hamilton campus after the hateful way she fought against everything fair, honest and ennobling!"

Robin, busy guiding the car through the thin, gray mist, nodded her sympathy of Phil's impulsive outburst. "Did you see her leave the florist's shop," she asked.

"Yes; just before you came back this last time. She dodged out of the store like a streak, jumped into a little black car she'd parked in front of the shop, and away she drove like the wind."

"Hm-m. That sounds rather suspicious. She may have had some dark and desperate motive." Robin was half smiling. "More likely she simply happened to go into the shop, saw the crowd across the street and curiosity got the better of her."

"I don't think so," Phil frowned and shook a doubting head. "She had an object in view. She isn't half so much interested in getting ready to build a garage on that property she snatched from you and Marjorie as she might be. I believe she bought it purely for spite; as an excuse to keep her near the campus. She's rich in her own right, and a law unto herself. It's the old story of idle hands and mischief. She has no worthy object in life. She's the kind of person who has to have something

to hammer away at. So she's settled herself near the campus to see what she can do to tear down what Page and Dean have built up."

Phil's voice rang out resentfully on the last sentence. She had felt suspicion rise within her the instant she caught sight of Leslie Cairns. "There!" she declared with some vehemence. "I've told you plainly what I think of Leslie Cairns. You know I've never said much about her before now. I don't mean to be a back-biter. But I think she's more likely to try to make mischief now than ever. She's vindictive. She's shown that. She likes to blame Marjorie, instead of herself, for the trouble she and the Sans had that wound up their B. A. prospects at Hamilton. I won't forgive her for misjudging Marjorie purposely."

"I don't blame you, old firecracker. I sympathize with your sputters," laughed Robin. "I've said as much as you about Leslie Cairns to Marjorie. It's just as Marvelous Manager says. We can't judge her on suspicion. If she should make us trouble, later, all we could do would be repair the damage done and go on minding our own affairs. No one can punish Leslie Cairns so effectively as Leslie Cairns herself."

"True enough, wise Robin." Phil's sunny smile broke from behind her briefly clouded features.

Let's leave her to her own downfall," she said lightly, "and consider instead our Thanksgiving thankfulnesses. I'm thankful the weather's growing better instead of worse, and doubly thankful we decided to go to town and engineer the dinner movement."

"Without us the girls might have had hard work reaching the inn," Robin asserted. "They couldn't have walked and look presentable after they reached Baretti's, and they would not have been able to hire any cars. They'd have *had* to telephone us, but they might have tried to help themselves first. That would have taken time, and been a failure in the end. By the time we had gone to their rescue it would have been late in the afternoon."

"We managed to dodge a fine flivver all around," observed Phil with a self-congratulatory nod.

Under Robin's slender practiced hands the car had been swiftly eating up the distance between town and the inn. The cousins hardly realized their nearness to it, so earnestly were they talking, until the quaint low structure appeared ahead of them, only a few rods distant, a welcome sight. Robin slowed down with a deep breath of satisfaction.

"You almost anchored our good ship Bubble in

a mud hole, *mon capitaine,*" teased Barbara. She scrambled from the tonneau, balanced herself on the running board and nimbly leaped the shallow beginnning of a deep, wide roadside puddle, the greater spread of which was in front of the car. Barbara flapped her arms and made a triumphant landing on wet but solid ground.

"No one is infallible," chuckled Robin. "Thank your stars I didn't splash you. It's your move, lady. Don't be afraid to make it," she turned to Phil with the gruff tone of a traffic officer. She and Phil both rose in the seat to leave the machine. Both beheld in the same instant a small black car coming toward them at high speed.

Swish; splatter; splash! The forward tires of the oncoming car struck the wide puddle with a force that sent the muddy water of the puddle upward in jets. In passing Robin's car the other machine gave a violent lurch toward it that threatened but did not precipitate a collision. On down the road the black car shot, spattering the mud and water high as it whizzed out of sight around a bend.

"Whew! Faugh!" Phil dashed away a splash of soft mud that had struck her squarely on the mouth. Face and clothing were liberally spattered with it. Robin had been equally unfortunate. Phil suddenly burst out laughing. "Oh, ha, ha!" she laughed.

"My poor polka dot cousin. You're a P. D., Robin; instead of a P. G."

"Stop laughing," ordered Robin, herself giggling immoderately at the disaster which had overtaken them. "Your face looks even worse than mine. And bouncing Bab escaped just in time. That last bounce saved you," she told grinning Barbara.

"What did I tell you only a little while ago?" Phil glanced up the pike in the direction in which the devastating car had disappeared. "She saw us before we saw her. She put on speed and did that stunt simply to be malicious. If we'd been half a second sooner in getting out of the car we might have had the most wonderful mud shower bath! She took the risk of smashing into our machine for the pleasure of spattering us. She's vindictive —just as I said."

"Leslie Cairns' own variety of sport." Barbara now hurried to where the two victims of Leslie Cairns' ill nature stood wiping the thin oozy mud from their "polka dot" faces. "You should have seen the expression of her face as her car zipped by ours. She looked delighted—a wicked, hateful kind of delight. No wonder Muriel and Jerry call her the Hob-goblin!"

"I crowed too soon. A mud-splashing is something we didn't dodge," Phil said ruefully. "I feel

as though I had been swimming in the mud. Come on, Barbara Severn, and get busy with these umbrellas. I can order you about. You're only a senior. Help from P. G.'s will also be appreciated. I'm tired and hungry and muddy. Ah, there stands the guardian angel of Hamilton!" Phil waved a gay hand to Signor Baretti who had just appeared in the doorway of the inn.

The little man responded to the wave. Then he disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. He returned at once with one of his olive-skinned kitchen helpers and proceeded to busy himself with the care of the umbrellas.

"We'll let the men carry the bumbershoots inside. If we go in there we'll not get away from the crowd for awhile," Phil predicted cannily. Remember our own Thanksgiving feed. Meanwhile I am starving to death by inches."

"We're not going inside, Signor Baretti," Robin told the smiling "guardian angel" as the helper disappeared with the last of the umbrellas.

"I know," the little man bobbed his head understandingly. "I know you are in the hurry. I don't see you till is done in the *ginnasio* the ball game you have tell me about. You say it is done, mebbe five the clock. I go there. Wait for you. When

I meet you I have for you the bus, the taxi—something to ride in for the dorm girls. Now I don't know which these. But I find out."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REASON WHY

"Oh, Marjorie Dean; dear old Marvelous Manager! I'm *so* glad you've come back to the campus. I feel like squealing for joy. I was never before quite so glad to see anyone!"

Marjorie, first off the train of her party, walked straight into Robin Page's welcoming, outstretched arms. The Sandford-bound party had left the campus under rain-threatening skies. They were returning to find Marjorie's first Hamilton friend decorated with a carpet of soft cold white. On Saturday the weather had grown colder. Sunday afternoon had brought a mild snow storm.

"Gracious; you must have missed me! This is surely a cordial reception, Pagie dear." Marjorie laughed her pleasure of re-union as she warmly returned Robin's hearty embrace.

"I have; *I have*," Robin's tones rose in a mild wail. "Oh, you lucky gang," she cried, surveying fondly the eight returned Travelers. "I drove your

car down tonight, Vera. Leila's hasn't come home from the repair shop yet."

Robin kept up a lively chatter as she was passed from one to another of the octette. Her extreme charm of face and manner made her place in the hearts of the little coterie of friends a very individual one. A less sensible girl than Robin might easily have been spoiled by the knowledge of her peculiar power to charm.

"Phil and Barbara ought to be here, too." Robin made a searching survey of the white, drifted platform with her eyes. "They started out to see if they could beg, borrow or steal a car. They wanted to come with me, but I told them to go and hunt a car of their own. I said: 'When you find it you may bring it to me,' " laughed Robin. "I knew we'd need two cars. I didn't care to call a station taxi. Wait till you hear my reason for cutting out those same taxies." Robin's delicate face hardened a trifle. "It's a very good——"

A sharp little shout of welcome broke in upon what Robin was saying. Phil, Barbara and Gussie Forbes suddenly appeared on the platform. Phil and Barbara were escorting Gussie with a great show of respect. Each had her by an arm. Both were endeavoring to look dignified. Gussie was frankly giggling her enjoyment of the situation.

"Captured a soph; tallest in captivity; absolutely primitive; untamed, probably belongs to the cave dwellers union," recited Phil, indicating Gussie with an enthusiastic flourish. "She may even be a Celt." Phil arched significant brows at Leila.

"May she, indeed?" Leila pretended deep surprise.

"You heard me say she *might* be," Phil retorted grandly. "Anyway, she has a car that's not in the repair shop. That's more important this evening than being a Celt."

"Now where is the one who told you that?" Leila glared about her, as if determined to hunt out the offender.

"You mustn't be *too* personal." Phil put her hand to her lips. Shielding them cup-fashion she said in a loud whisper: "Keep quiet. She mustn't suspect the reason we invited her."

"I doubt if she ever finds out," was Leila's satirical assurance.

"Poor, benighted soph." Vera turned a pitying look on the primitive, untamed soph who returned it with a bold wink.

"She seems to understand a few things," Muriel made equally sarcastic comment.

"I'll guarantee not to ditch the car, even if I do have an untamed air," chuckled Gussie. "Come on,

Travelers. No place like home when home's a good place. Six to a car. Come, choose your east. Come, choose your west."

The Travelers obeyed the call, laughingly dividing themselves into two groups. Robin, Marjorie, Muriel, Phil, Lucy and Vera took possession of Vera's car. Leila, Jerry, Kathie, Barbara, Ronny and Gussie fell to Gussie's big high-powered touring car. They were all in an uproariously merry mood as their frequent peals of laughter went to testify.

Phil magnanimously volunteered to forego the delights of re-union and drive the car so that Robin could tell the girls the campus news. Lucy elected to ride on the front seat beside her. "Such a noble act deserves the reward of my company. Besides, I'll hear the same news later. There'll be at least half a dozen editions of it," she slyly prophesied.

Marjorie's first eager question: "How did everything go?" set Robin off on an account of the calamity that had overtaken the dormitory girls on Thanksgiving morning. She had just reached the point in her narrative where she and Barbara and Phil had piled the umbrellas belonging to the dormitory girls into the automobile and started for the inn when Phil brought the car up in front of Way-

land Hall and called out in stentorian tones: "All out. Step lively."

"I'll have to tell you the rest when we are settled again up in Marjorie's room. This is the Tragedy of Page minus Dean, in two acts. Wait till you hear the sensational climax of Act One," Robin animatedly informed the absorbed listeners.

The brightness of reunion had been gradually fading from Marjorie's face as she listened to Robin to give place to an expression of almost stern gravity. Robin had not yet brought Leslie Cairns into the narrative. Nevertheless her name had suddenly leaped into Marjorie's mind. Why Robin's recital of her difficulties with two warring Italian garage owners should have reminded Marjorie of Leslie Cairns she was momentarily at a loss to understand. She conceived a swift, unbidden, formless suspicion of Leslie which she instantly tried to dismiss as unworthy. It continued to tantalize her brain until she recalled with relief that it was the mention of the Italians as garage owners that had brought Leslie to the fore in her mind. Leslie herself was a prospective garage owner.

Half an hour later when Robin had resumed her story to her interested audience of chums Marjorie sat, chin on hand, staring in secret bewilderment at Robin as the latter indignantly recounted the sen-

sational mud-spattering climax of Act One, with Leslie Cairns as the villain. Her curious, flitting suspicion of Leslie had not then been idle. She felt as she might have if she had suddenly reached up and picked her conviction of Leslie's treachery out of the atmosphere.

"Phil insisted from the first that Leslie Cairns had an object in view when she stood in the store watching us from behind the palms. I tried to give her the benefit of the doubt. Afterward, when she *deliberately ran her car through that mud puddle as hard as she could drive it, and as close to our car as she dared,* I decided Phil was right," Robin asserted with an energetic bob of her head.

"What do you think her object was, Phil? Leslie Cairns', I mean?" Vera voiced the curiosity of the others. "Do you think she heard about the dinner to the off-campus girls from her friends?"

"Of course. She must have. Hard to say what her object may have been. She was probably hunting mischief. When she couldn't find any to do, it put her in a worse humor than ever with us and she vented her spite in a mud-spattering act." Phil acompanied her opinion with a contemptuous shrug.

"That ends the first act, ladies and Gentleman Gus," announced Robin. "The second act has nothing to do with Leslie Cairns. It features Guiseppe

Baretti, the hero of the hour and the knightly defender of the dormitory girls." She accompanied the announcement with flamboyant gestures.

"Thank you for special mention." Gussie stood up and bowed.

"You're welcome," beamed Robin. "I couldn't resist including you. It sounded well."

"It's a poor way to do, to be calling attention to oneself in the middle of a story," grumbled Leila. "My fine old Irish manners tell me that."

"Ask them to tell you to practice the lost art of silence," Muriel blandly requested. "When you get the information pass it on to Gentleman Gus. Whisper it so we can't hear it. We're anxious to hear the rest of Robin's tale."

"Ah, but you have an idea you are talking!" Leila exclaimed with withering sarcasm.

"*Taisez-vous.*" Robin shook a playfully threatening finger at the merry gabblers. "I'll resume before you have time to interrupt me again. After Phil, Barbara and I got our mud shower we hustled to Silverton Hall. We were late for dinner; awfully late, but everybody was good to us and the dinner was splendiferous. We started for the gym the minute we had finished dinner. Gussie, you can tell the crowd about the game afterward. I want to keep to the subject of my own troubles as a pro-

motor, minus a partner. It was a great game. I'll say that much."

"Gentleman Gus is the best player I ever saw tackle a game," Phil praised. "That's all. 'Scuse me for interrupting." She cast a comical glance at Robin, who returned it with a reproving one, then continued:

"When the game was over I went outside the gym wondering if Signor Baretti really had been able to reduce those provoking Italians to reason. He was waiting just outside the double doors. I know by the way he smiled that he had found some way of helping us. He told me he had managed to make Mariani let him have four taxies and that he had his own large car and a smaller one he used when making hurried business trips. I still had Vera's car. We had come over from Silverton Hall in it. His big car would easily hold ten passengers. by having the taxies make a second trip all the off-campus girls would be taken care of."

"Mariani himself was driving one of the taxies. You should have seen the expression on his fat face! He was so peeved at Baretti he didn't know which way to look!" Phil interposed, laughing at the memory of the miffed Italian's grouchy face.

"Baretti had the machines lined up on the branch drive east of the gym. I asked him if the men

could be depended to bring the girls back to the campus after supper and come for them after the dance. He said: 'Yes-s, I tell again. Then sure.'" Robin imitated the inn-keeper briefly. "He marched up to the first, then the others, and said about six words to each; except Mariani. He and Guiseppe had quite an argument. I could tell by the way they wagged their heads and shrugged their shoulders and made gestures to go with almost every word they said. Finally Signor Baretti came over to me and said very proudly that it was all right; to tell the 'dorm' girls to get into the machines. Just about that time——"

"We came along with our little chug wagons," broke in Gussie mischievously. "That's all. Don't forget to give us credit."

"Don't worry. I never forget," recklessly boasted Robin. "Yes; Gentleman Gus, Calista, Norma and Laura came along again with their cars and the taxies didn't have to make a second trip. Lillian couldn't come. Their dinner was so late. Besides they were entertaining at her home in the evening. Mariani furnished the same four taxies out to the campus in the evening at the usual rate. After the dance he only sent two, and the drivers said they couldn't come back. I was positively green with rage. I tried to catch Mariani on the 'phone,

but he wouldn't answer. The girls helped out again and we managed to land the last 'dorm' on her own doorstep a little after midnight."

"Did you tell Guiseppe of Mariani's second flivver?" Vera asked. "If you haven't, you'd better. He will wish to know it. He'll think you haven't much confidence in him if you don't let him know."

"It was too late to bother him that night, and I was so busy Friday and Saturday I didn't have time to go and see him. I intend to tell him."

"Did the busses run again on Friday? Are they running now?" were Marjorie's questions, uttered in quick succession.

"No, *sir;* they aren't running yet. And Mariani isn't giving good service. I know of a number of different girls who have since then 'phoned for taxies, and have had no service. Whenever they've called on the 'phone about it, no one at Mariani's garage has seemed to know anything," Barbara finished disgustedly.

"What did Signor Baretti say about the busses not running? Did he find out what the trouble was?" Again it was Marjorie who questioned.

"He hadn't found out the reason when he came to the gym after the game on Thursday. He said he would, though. I know he will. He is the never-give-up kind. When he does find out we'll hear

from him." Robin said this with the utmost confidence.

"And now, may a poor, timid Irish woman ask a question?" Leila had been listening to Robin, an inscrutable smile touching her red lips. Her bright blue eyes were alive with a cold sparkle which Jerry had once declared looked like fire behind ice.

"Do ask it." Jerry had instantly marked the expression. She straightened in her chair, the picture of expectation. Leila was about to say something startling.

"That I will." Leila flashed Jerry a knowing smile. "What has Leslie Cairns to do with the second act of the Tragedy of Page minus Dean?"

"Now you have asked a question." Ronny's gray eyes gleamed shrewdly as she brought out the crisp commendation. "When we fit an answer to that very leading question we'll probably know why the busses stopped running."

CHAPTER XVII.

A QUEER JOKE

LEILA's frank assumption that Leslie Cairns had been a secret Thanksgiving Day disturber could not fail to find lodgment in the minds of the girls gathered in Marjorie's room that snowy Sunday afternoon. There was not one among them who did not know considerable about Leslie Cairns' underhanded methods of trouble-making. They knew, too, that she had oftenest directed her spite against Marjorie. Marjorie was adored for her beauty, as Leslie was disliked for her lack of it. Her unfair treacherous ways made her unprepossessing features even more ugly in their girlish eyes.

Be it said to their credit they tried not to discuss Leslie any more personally than could be helped under the circumstances. All of them were of the same opinion. Leslie had not gotten over her grudge against Marjorie. She had chosen to strike at a time when she knew Marjorie would not be on the campus to guard her benevolent interests.

"She's as relentless as an Indian," was Jerry's opinion of the ex-student. "It's a good thing for Bean that she has me to protect her."

Marjorie did not take the indignant view of Leslie Cairns' further attempt to persecute her which her comrades entertained. Still she was now more concerned about it within herself than she had been in her earlier campus days when Commencement was a far-distant prospect. Now she was a promoter. She smiled to herself whenever the word crossed her brain. She was a promoter of democracy; a promoter of happiness. Before she had gone through the gate of Commencement she feared that she had been far more interested in *her* welfare than she had that of others. Now her work demanded the thought of others above her personal wishes and inclinations. It became more than ever necessary that she should make it her business to guard the interests of those who would benefit by and through the efforts of Page and Dean.

"Between you and me," she said confidentially to Jerry the next afternoon in the privacy of their room." I wish Leslie Cairns would go on an expedition to Alaska, Kamchatka, Bolivia, Tasmania or any other far away point where she'd be neither seen nor even heard of for a long time." Marjorie's

tone was anything but vindictive. Her brown eyes regarded Jerry somberly.

"Your wish and your tone don't harmonize," criticized Jerry. "Why wish your worst enemy almost off the face of the earth in such a mournful tone? Which shall I believe?"

"Either or neither. Suit yourself," Marjorie stood before the mirror of her dressing table adjusting a chic little green velvet hat to just the right angle on her curly head. The hat placed to her satisfaction she swung round from the mirror saying forcefully, "It makes me weary, Jerry, even to have to think of Leslie Cairns. She isn't my worst enemy. She's her own. I wish someone could make her understand that. But not I."

"Who?" Jerry looked up in mock alarm from the translation into French which she was in indifferent process of making. "I hope you didn't mean me, Bean."

"No, not you." Marjorie's merry laugh was heard. "I don't know who. I won't allow myself to label Leslie Cairns as dangerous. In the past she usually overreached herself every time she started trouble."

"You are living in the present, Bean," Jerry staidly corrected, "and Les, as her pals used to call her, is living in our village, too, and right on the

job. She's like an epidemic. No one knows how or when she may break out. Things were whizzing along on wheels when we went home at Thanksgiving. Next day it rained and the busses all stopped running. They aren't running yet. Now we can't blame Les for the rain, but what about the busses?"

"I'll answer that question when I come back from Baretti's. I'm sure that is what Signor Baretti wishes to talk about." Marjorie had that morning received a note from the Italian asking her and Robin to come to the restaurant at three o'clock that afternoon. "Bye, Jeremiah. See you later. Truly I'll be back to dinner."

She encountered Robin when within a few steps of the inn looking her prettiest in a mink-trimmed suit of brown and the smartest of mink hats.

"Such magnificence!" Marjorie exclaimed. "Why didn't you tell me there was to be a display of fashion on the campus this P. M.?"

"Didn't know it myself until I went over to the Hall after I left the Biology laboratory this afternoon. There I found a big box on purpose for Robin. I ordered this suit in New York just before I came back to Hamilton. I had to write two hurry-up letters to the tailor about it, but—here it is at last." Robin took a jaunty step or two ahead of Marjorie better to display her new costume.

"It's a work of art," Marjorie smilingly told her with her ready graciousness "Guiseppe won't realize that I'm present when you burst upon him in all your glory."

"Well—not quite so bad as that," Robin disagreed, chuckling. "He'll probably say, first thing, that if you had been here the busses wouldn't have stopped running."

"That'll do. I think we're even now." Marjorie's eyes were dancing. She was a lovely picture of blooming girlhood, the dark green of her long coat with its wide collar and bands of black fox bringing out more fully the apple blossom tint of her rounded cheeks.

"So, Miss Dean, you come back again. I am glad." Baretti had hastened from the far end of the room to greet his callers. "You have the nice time at home? Your father and mother, they are well?" he asked with polite interest. "I think I never know before two such nices ones as your father, your mother." The Italian had been introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Dean during the previous June when they had come to Hamilton to attend the Commencement exercises.

"They are very well, thank you, Signor Baretti. I have brought back their best wishes to you. They especially asked me to tell you that they appreciated

your message to them." The innkeeper had sent them a message of good will in his sincere, if broken English.

"That is good; verra good for me. When you write the letter, perhaps you have the time say my good wishes once more to them," he asked, slightly hesitant. "Now come, both of you. I have the fine maple mousse today. My Italiano boys in the kitchen make. None can make better than these."

"We adore the maple mousse your boys make!" Robin assured Baretti. Marjorie echoed her warm praise of the dainty.

They obediently followed him to one of the vacant tables and seated themselves in the chairs he pulled out for them. He stood for a moment ceremoniously waiting for one or the other of them to ask him to join them.

"I hope you aren't too busy to sit down at the table for a few minutes and tell us about the busses," Marjorie cordially paved the way.

"What you think, Miss Page; Miss Dean?" the little proprietor leaned earnestly forward. An apple-cheeked Italian waitress had been sent for the maple mousse. "Sabani send me the word he don't run the busses—not if I say so hundred times. Ha, ha, ha!" Baretti threw back his head with a derisive laugh.

"How encouraging!" Marjorie exclaimed with light mockery. In spite of the difficulties that had overtaken Page and Dean she could not resist smiling over the child-like message of defiance Sabani had sent to Baretti.

The Italian understood her tone and said. "Now you only make the fun of me, Miss Dean."

"What does Sabani intend to do about sending busses over the campus route?" Robin asked anxiously. "Why has he cut the campus out? All the answer we've ever received from him to those two questions is that two of his busses are laid up for repairs and the third is running entirely on the Bretan Hill route."

"A-a-ah; he only makes the talk. He don't tell nothin' true. Nev-ver-r Sabani tell the truth. He say me the same he say you, Miss Page. I say him: 'Look you; this my eye.' Put my finger to my eye like this. 'I see two your busses run in town yesterday.' Then he is verra mad, but he tell me verra smart: "Oh, yes; you see. That one bus make only one trip to West Hamilton, then break down again." I tell him I am not foolish. I know what I see. I say: 'What is the matter you don't want to give the dorm girls the service?' "

"That was straight from the shoulder." Marjorie nodded her approbation.

"Good for you, Signor Baretti." Robin lightly clapped her hands.

"He give me the verra queer look. Mebbe he is the little scared. I speak to him verra quick—look me so mad." Baretti straightened in his chair and gave an illustration of his idea of stern, offended dignity. "Then he say he don't know what I mean. I tell him he will know soon, an' he won't like. Then he is more scare. He say he tell me somethin' verra private. This is it. He don't like take the dorm girls to the campus in the bus for he is mad because they ride too much in Mariani's taxies. Mariani is the *nemico* to him. That mean hate verra hard. I laugh at him. I say him that is the mos' bigges' lie he tell yet."

"What an excuse!" Robin turned disgustedly to Marjorie. "It's so flimsy it hardly holds together in the telling. The dormitory girls hardly ever patronize the taxies on account of the expense, Singor Baretti," she explained to their host. "Sabani appeared well pleased in the beginning to have those seventy-two fares twice a day, not to mention the extra campus traffic he received. I never trusted that man." Robin shook a disapproving head.

"Naw." Baretti forgot manners and indulged in his pet "Naw" by way of expressing his contempt. "Well, I say him, 'Nev-ver-r you min',

Sabani, I know the way to do.' I laugh and go way from him. I think of Floroni who drive one the busses. I know he don't like Sabani. I go in the street watch for him. He is drive the bus to Breton Hill. I have to wait long time for him. I drive my car out on the pike, wait for him there. I say to him come to my restaurant tonight after he make last trip. That is ten of the clock. He say he will."

"And did he keep his word?" Marjorie asked eagerly. Two pairs of bright eyes fixed themselves upon the Italian. Neither girl had missed the note of triumph which had sprung into his voice.

"Yes, oo-h, yes," was the instant reply. "Floroni is my frien'. Now he is my driver for my truck. I give him this place. He tell me he don' want work mor' for Sabani, for he is no good. He say he can't give up the place when he has the family to work for. Then I say him: 'You don't like Sabani. You say me: Why he treat the dorm girls so bad; don't give them any service with the busses?' "

Baretti made an eloquent pause as his black eyes sent a triumphant gleam toward one then the other of his listeners. They watched him in expectation.

"Floroni say: 'Yes, I tell you, Sabani don't tell me nothin'. I see an' hear myself. Sabani get

plenta mona becaus' he don't run the busses to the campus."

"Plenty of money because he doesn't run the busses?" cried Robin her eyes widening with surprise. "I can't see how that——"

"Yes-s;" the little proprietor interposed, "a trace of excitement ruffling his quick, stolid assent. "He get that mona becaus' Miss Car-rins give to him. She go to his garage two days before Thanksgiving; talk to him there. It is in the morning verra early. Floroni and the other drivers take out the busses. Floroni happen walk by her. He hear her tell Sabani this: 'What you care, an' I make worth the time.'. He don't know then what she mean. Day befor' Thanksgiving Sabani say him, 'I give you holiday tomorrow; mebbe more days. Two the busses need the repairs. I pay you jus' same as when you drive but you stay in the garage. You wash the cars; do such things.' And so it is. He don't like, but he need the mona'." The Italian spread his hands with a deprecating gesture. "He say, Miss Car-rins make all the trouble."

Listening to Baretti's information concerning the bus trouble it occurred to both Robin and Marjorie in the same instant that they might have expected to hear the name of Leslie Cairns as the real power

of malice. Robin's flash of surprise at Baretti's first accusation against Sabani instantly died out. She knew that it was not the first time that Leslie Cairns had bribed her way to her objectives.

"Then there is no certainty as to when the busses will begin running again," Marjorie said, brows contracted in a reflective little frown. "What ought we to do, Signor Baretti?" She glanced appealingly at the little man.

"Ah, that is the way I like! I am the one to help you. It is already done. Tomorrow you see the busses run to the campus again with the dorm girls." Baretti made this promise almost gleefully.

"Tomorrow!" two voices rose simultaneously.

"Yes-s." Baretti surveyed the amazed firm of Page and Dean with his broadest, most beaming smile. "This morning I have go to Sabani. Aa-h-h, but we have the fight; but not with the hand." He doubled a fist and shook his hand. "It was the fight talk. I scare him; make him think I know all he say to Miss Car-rins; all she say him. Then I tell him I will go to the mayor of Hamilton an' tell the mayor what he have done. The mayor will take away his license for the bus line. 'I make you many troubles, for you deserve, you don't run the busses to the campus tomorrow.' After while he say he will do it. He say Miss Car-rins tell him

it was the joke she want play on the dorm girls. I say him it is the poor joke, but not so bad as the joke I will play on him if he don' run the busses to the campus tomorrow."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN EVIL INSPIRATION

DUE to the heavy rain storm on Thanksgiving Day, Leslie Cairns' plans had gone considerably "aglee." To parade the Dazzler, the white car she had loaned Doris, with Doris in it and clothed in expensive white furry finery, had been an impossibility. In consequence a very much disgruntled Leslie Cairns had telephoned Doris that "it was all off" and to meet her instead at the Colonial at two o'clock.

Before the two girls had reached their Thanksgiving dessert they had come perilously near quarreling. Leslie was in bad humor because of the inclement weather. She had the fierce hatred of being disappointed common to utterly selfish persons. The news that Doris would grace the hop on the Saturday evening following Thanksgiving Day and take charge at the door of the admission fee to the frolic had not pleased Leslie.

"You should have known better than to take that

job, even though it does give you a chance to show off your looks," she had upbraided Doris in a surly tone. "You say you can't endure Bean and her crowd. Then—bing!—you whirl about and let them make a silly of you. Page is Bean's partner and one of the celebrated Beanstalks. That didn't hinder you from being as sweet as cream to Page and saying, 'yes,' in a hurry when she asked you to be a little pet donkey and collect the fees at the hop."

"Leslie!" Doris had said in a low, furious voice, "you shall not talk to me in that tone, or call me a donkey. I won't stand it. You are simply in a rage with everything and everybody today because things didn't go to suit you. Besides, it was Miss Wenderblatt not Miss Page who asked me. You are rude and boorish."

"I'll say what I please. I've a perfect right to express an opinion." Leslie had flung back with equal fury. "What you'll have to do is to go and tell that smug Dutch prig, Wenderblatt, that you won't be able to do the tax-collection stunt Saturday night. You have another engagement. You *have*, you know. One with *me*. We'll go to the Lotus to dinner and wander into that select rube recreation palace known as the Hamilton Opera House."

"I do not intend to tell Miss Wenderblatt any such thing," Doris had retorted with belligerent independence. "Just remember she is Professor Wenderblatt's daughter. This stunt I am to do at the hop will boom me a lot on the campus. I have a perfectly ducky dress to wear. Besides Miss Peyton and Miss Barton are going to try to start a beauty contest at the hop. There is no doubt but that I shall win it."

"Your chances *are* fair since Bean's taken her precious self to dear Sanford, the place where Beans and Beanstocks grow," Leslie had sneered.

"You are so impossible today, Leslie. I sha'n't lower myself by quarreling with you," had been Doris's ultimatum, delivered in offended haughtiness.

"You'd never win a prize for amiability. You're the most selfish proposition, Doris Monroe, that I've ever met," Leslie had retaliated.

"Get acquainted with yourself," Doris had sarcastically advised.

The ending of their Thanksgiving dinner had been punctuated freely with other similar pleasantries. The two self-willed girls had left the Colonial hardly on speaking terms. It was nearing half past three o'clock when they had stepped outside the tea room. The rain having stopped Doris had

sulkily announced her intention to walk to Wayland Hall instead of allowing Leslie to run her there in the car. Leslie had snapped back: "Don't care what you do. You're too selfish to consider me. You know I counted on you to help me amuse myself tonight in that dead dump of a town. Go to the dance. I hope you have a punk evening."

"In going to the hop I'm only doing what you asked me to do quite a while ago. You told me then that you wanted me to make myself popular on the campus. Well; this is the way to do it. Think it over. You'll find I'm right," had been Doris's parting shot as she separated from her ill-humored companion.

Determining to teach Doris a lesson, Leslie let the rest of the week go by without holding any communication with the sophomore. She had spent a lonely Thanksgiving evening and blamed Doris heavily because of it. She was also dreadfully miffed at the partial failure of her contemptible plot against the dormitory girls' welfare. When she had awakened on Thanksgiving morning, to see violently weeping skies that promised an all-day deluge, she had smiled contentedly. She had effectually blocked Bean's plans for the day. And for a good many days to come! Such was her belief, when, after having posted herself in the palm-

screened window of the florist's shop to see that Sabani kept his word and ran no busses, she had frowningly witnessed the arrival of Phil, Barbara and Robin on the scene and what followed as a result of their timely arrival.

When Leslie had had the galling experience of seeing the Thansksgiving part of her plot far on the way to failure she had flung out of the florist's in a rage, jumped into her car and set off for the campus without any definite reason whatever for going there. The main point had been to keep "rag, tag and bob-tail," as she had ironically named the off-campus girls, from getting to the "free feed" at the "dago's hash house." She had failed to do this. The "beggars" had managed to reach Baretti's in spite of the rain. They would return to town in the same way that they had come. Leslie felt particularly spiteful toward Robin Page. So very spiteful that she indulged her rancor in "splashing" Phil and Robin when the opportunity chanced to offer itself.

On the Sunday afternoon following Thanksgiving while the Travelers, old and new, had gathered in Marjorie's room in serious confab over the momentous happenings of the Thanksgiving holiday, Leslie Cairns had sat lazily stretched in an easy chair in her hotel room, eyes half closed, her dark mind

wholly concentrated on an idea which had just introduced itself to her. It was an evil inspiration, born of a group of headlines she had glanced at in one of the Sunday papers.

"I wonder why I never thought of that before," she had said half aloud as she dipped a hand into a box of nut chocolates on the table beside her and thoughtfully nibbled a cream nut. "I wish I dared ask *him* to help me. He could do what I want done as quickly as a wink. He couldn't kick, either, for he has handled more than one such stunt. I think I'll write him. 'Nothing venture nothing have.' I'll wait a few days until I see how the bus scheme works out, then I'll write. I've never written him since he—since he—." Leslie's voice had faltered. She had sat staring into the ruddy embers of the open fire looking less like a malicious mischief-maker and more like a sorrowful young woman than ever before. There was only one person in the world who had ever commanded Leslie's respect and tenderness. That one was her father.

CHAPTER XIX.

A BUSY INVESTIGATOR

On Monday, Leslie, now elated by her newest plan, relented and called Doris Monroe on the telephone. While she had been ready to condemn Doris for going to the hop, nevertheless she had a thriving curiosity to know what had happened at the dance.

The two girls met by appointment at the Colonial and in a far pleasanter frame of mind than that of the preceding Thursday.

"I may go to New York," Leslie announced, directly they had found a table to suit their difficult fancy and seated themselves. "I'm expecting a letter or a telegram from"—Leslie checked herself abruptly—"from a dear friend," she continued. "Even if I shouldn't hear from this friend I may go anyway."

"And, of course, I can't get leave of absence to go with you." Doris spoke pettishly, dissatisfaction looming large on her perfect features. "We

made a mistake in not going there at Thanksgiving. You could have gone. It rained too hard for you to attend to any business about your garage site."

"That's all you know about it," Leslie indulged in one of her silent laughs. "I was very busy in town on Thanksgiving morning. Don't get New Yorkitis, Goldie. We'll go to little old N. Y. for the Easter vacation. Maybe our house will be open then," she predicted hopefully. She felt signally cheered even by the remote prospect.

Leslie had already begun the composition of a letter to her father. She wrote, crossed out and rewrote. She had not yet evolved from her labor the letter she hoped would soften her father's unforgiving heart.

"When will you go to New York?" Doris showed signs of mollification. The promise of an Easter vacation in New York with Leslie to show her the metropolis was something to be gracious over.

"Don't know. Not for a week. Perhaps not for two." Leslie donned her most indifferent air. She had volunteered as much as she thought wise to Doris concerning her New York trip. "Tell me about the hop," she said craftily, switching the subject from herself to her companion.

"Oh, it was so, so." Doris shrugged lightly.

"My pale blue frock was sweet. A lot of fuss was made over me. There wasn't a Beauty contest." Her face registered disappointment. "Julia Peyton said she'd start one, but she couldn't make it go. The crowd was crazy to dance."

"She is a big bluff, and her pal, red-headed Miss Carter is a stupid. Look out for both of them," was Leslie's succinct criticism. She had been introduced to the two sophs by Doris and had mentally decided against both.

"They have been awfully sweet to me," Doris returned half offended. She did not enjoy having her admirers belittled. "So were Miss Page, Miss Moore and the rest of that new sorority. Miss Page is charming. What a pity she throws herself away on that horrid Sanford crowd. I was glad they weren't at the hop. I'd not have taken charge of the admission fee if they had been."

"You would if it had happened to suit you," Leslie coolly told her. Then she laughed. "Don't bristle and get ready to throw quills at me, Goldie. I know you thoroughly. I must say I'm surprised to hear you raving over Page when you know Page and Bean are my special abomination."

"You never said a word about Miss Page," Doris flashed back.

"She's a Beanstalk. Wasn't that enough to let

you know what I thought of her? Aren't she and Bean always together?"

"I'm not crazy about Miss Page," Doris jerked out angrily. She purposely avoided answering Leslie's questions.

"I'll say you're not. There's only one person you are crazy about. That's Doris Monroe," Leslie said with savage emphasis.

"That's not fair, nor true," sputtered Doris. Unguardedly her clear cold tones rose higher than she knew. "I'm not crazy about myself—or anyone else. I'd like you best of all, Leslie, if you weren't so awfully bullying. I won't be bullied. That's all there is to it."

"So it would appear." Leslie's retort was grimly sarcastic. "Sorry you had to tell the natives about it." She made an angry movement of the head toward the next table below them. Around it sat Gussie Forbes, Calista Wilmot and Flossie Hart, placidly eating ices.

"They couldn't hear what I said," Doris defended, half abashed, half sulky. "I'm sure they couldn't."

"You're the one to worry, if they did," shrugged Leslie. "It can't do one little bit of harm to me. Forget it. What do you know about this bus trouble the bread and cheese priggies are having? Have

the busses really stopped running between town and the campus? I heard they stopped on Thanksgiving Day. I haven't seen you since then." Leslie made a success of looking innocent.

She had not divulged to Doris, either before or on Thanksgiving Day, her part in the bus trouble. Bitter experience with the Sans had taught her the value of keeping her own counsel. She now listened to Doris's vague information concerning the non-running busses, an enigmatical smile playing upon her lips. She was delighted to hear of the inconvenience her scheme had caused and determined that it should continue indefinitely. She had money. Sabani would do as she ordered so long as plenty of money accompanied her orders.

"Those two were certainly having a fuss," commented Flossie Hart as the three sophomores left the tea room, directly after Doris's angry outburst.

"I'm going to tell Marjorie about it." Gussie made the announcement with great decision.

"Telling tales is a bad practice," laughingly rebuked Flossie.

"I know why you're going to." Calista's quick mind instantly jumped at a certain conclusion. "I will, if you don't."

"I'm still in the dark," mourned Flossie. "Kind-

ly enlighten me. Forgive me for being so stupid. Doesn't that sound just like Muriel?"

"Yes, Floss. Muriel might think it was herself talking if she happened to hear you." Gussie favored her room-mate with a condescending smile.

The three hurried along the street to the main campus gate. "Race you to the Hall," challenged Gussie the instant they set foot on the snow-patched brown of the campus. A playful wind, not too penetrating, frolicked with them as they ran, blowing added bloom into their cheeks.

Aside from the one remark Flossie had made about Doris and Leslie Cairns nothing else had been said. As members of the new Travelers the Bertram girls were endeavoring to live up to one of the basic rules of their code; never to discuss anyone for the interest derived from the discussion. The discussion must come as necessary to the promotion of welfare.

"I hope Marjorie's in." Gussie was presently pounding vigorously on the door of 15, a chum at each elbow.

"Why not leave us the door?" blandly inquired Jerry as she opened it to the vociferous demand for admission. "Is it really you, Gentleman Gus? I haven't seen you for as much as three hours. The

last occasion was at lunch." Jerry smirked soulfully at her callers.

"Where's Marjorie?" Gussie peered over Jerry's head and into the room. "We've a bit of special information. You're privileged to hear it too, Jeremiah?"

"She has gone to Baretti's. She was to meet Robin and go there. They had an appointment with Guiseppe. He wrote Marjorie one of his one-line funny little notes. I think he has news for Page and Dean."

"Um-m." Gussie looked undecided for a moment. "We'll come back later." She looked first at her chums for conformation, then at Jerry. "Let us know when she comes, Jerry. We love you dearly enough to hang around in your room till Marjorie comes, but there's a time for study, et cetera. Only I don't know when it will be if not now. You may pound on my door as hard as I pounded on yours, but no harder."

"Suit yourself," Jerry waved an affable hand. "I can live without you. I have a letter to write. I'd enjoy perfect quiet."

The three sophomores went gaily down the hall. Jerry again shut herself in her room to write a letter which she had for some time been searching for an excuse to write. That very morning

in the corridor of Hamilton Hall she had found it. It had come in the shape of a particularly sheer, dainty, hand-embroidered handkerchief, bearing the monogram L. M. W. Instantly her mind had began to canvass among the initials of her friends for L. M. W. Intending to place it in the students' "Lost and Found," after class Jerry had tucked it away in her hand bag and hurried to her recitation.

During class her mind continued to revert to the initials L. M. W. Jerry thoroughly enjoyed being baffled temporarily by a problem which she was confident she would solve eventually. In the midst of her cogitations she chanced to call to mind the name of a student whose initials were surely L. M. W. Whereupon a beatific smile paused on Jerry's face for a second. She promptly forgot her surroundings to dwell triumphantly instead upon the beauty of a certain stunt she determined to "put over" as soon as she returned to her room. Nor did she visit the "Lost and Found" on her way to the Hall.

Seated at the study table Jerry eyed the dainty handkerchief meditatively. Should she write to L. M. W., whom she hoped was Louise M. Walker, merely asking the sophomore if she had lost the beautiful bit of linen, or should she fold the hand-

kerchief inside a note she would write, asking Miss Walker to place the article in the "Lost and Found" should it not belong to her? Jerry considered the problem owlishly, then wrote:

"DEAR MISS WALKER:

"Have you lost a handkerchief? I am enclosing one I found, in the corridor of Hamilton Hall, bearing your initials. If it is not yours, will you kindly place it in the 'Lost and Found'?

"Sincerely,

"GERALDINE MACY."

"There! She'll be an untutored savage if she ignores my kindly little act," Jerry decided with a grin. "If I wrote asking her if she'd lost the handkerchief she might 'phone me, or come here. That's not what I'm after. She ought to write me a line of acknowledgment. If she should—I'll know one thing that I don't know now."

CHAPTER XX.

MARJORIE FINDS A SUPPORTER

MARJORIE returned from Baretti's full of the glorious news of the little proprietor's triumph over Sabani in behalf of Page and Dean. Jerry was equally elated and burst into one of what she had named "Joyful Jingles to Bean." She spouted them on special occasions.

> "Thanks to our faithful dago friend
> The Goblin's schemes fell through.
> 'Tis plainly seen, oh, upright Bean
> Such trouble's not for you."

She did a fantastic polka step around Marjorie, keeping time with her declamation.

"You funny old goose!" Marjorie caught her and wrapped both arms about her. "Yes, the Goblin's scheme did fall through, and, oh, rapture, the busses will begin running again tomorrow morning! What would we have done without Signor

Baretti's help? He's splendid in his interest in our work here. He ranks with Miss Susanna, Prexy and Professor Wenderblatt as our most loyal supporters. Now I must tell you what he did."

"Oh, save it till I go for Gus, Calista and Flossie. Let them hear it. They've been looking for you. They've something on their minds. So has Jeremiah. This is another wildly eventful day." Jerry smiled warmly down on Marjorie who had taken off her wraps and was now lounging in one of the arm chairs. She reclined there, a graceful lissome figure in her straight gown of pale jade broadcloth, with no trimming save that of her superb young beauty to set it off.

"All the days here are somehow wildly eventful," Marjorie said with a little devoted smile. "Something remarkable seems always to be happening."

"Too true," Jerry agreed with solemnity. "But some days are even more eventful than that. I will mention as an example the day before we went home for Thanksgiving." Both girls began to laugh. "That was some day. Muriel began it right by tipping her cup of coffee into my lap. Next. I fell down three steps of the stairs. Next. I dropped a new library book in the mud. Next.

I went to the gym to see Gentleman Gus and got hit on the nose with the ball. Next. I couldn't find my suits case in the trunk room so I had to borrow one. Do you recall any other exciting misfortunes of that particular day?" She turned innocently inquiring eyes upon Marjorie.

"Nope. You were a martyr that day, poor old Jeremiah."

"I need your sympathy, Bean," Jerry rejoined brokenly. "It's a hard world for some folks. Still I'm glad I've survived."

"Cheer up. Here come the Bertramites." Marjorie's keen ears had caught the sound of familiar voices. She went to the door and ushered in the trio of sophs.

"What's the latest from Guiseppe, the defender?" Gussie immediately clamored to know. The three girls surrounded Marjorie while Jerry made an equally eager fourth member of the group.

It did not take long to put them in possession of the good news. They received it with enthusiasm, modified to keep within the limit of noise. Since the evening when Marjorie and Jerry had been called to the door by Miss Peyton on the head of being disturbers of quiet no more reports had been made against them. Miss Peyton's threat that she would place the matter before President

Matthews had evidently never been carried out. Marjorie could only hope that it had not. The president's cordiality to her whenever they chanced to meet assured her of his regard. Still she disliked the idea intensely of being reported to headquarters for anything so utterly uncontrolled and childish.

"What a strange, dreadful life for a girl to lead!" exclaimed Calista Wilmot. She referred to Marjorie's account of Leslie Cairn's part in the bus trouble.

"Yes, it is." Marjorie's reply was spoken in all seriousness. "After Signor Baretti had told us of what she had done Robin and I both thought we ought not tell even you girls of it. Then we thought of the way Phil, Barbara and the rest of you helped break up her plot by coming out with your cars in the storm. We decided it was only fair to tell you the exact circumstances. The Travelers, old and new, should be, and are, I'm sure, trustworthy. None of them would circulate any of the private business of the club about the campus."

"There's another argument just as strong as to why Leslie Cairns' actions shouldn't be kept secret from the club. She doesn't deserve to be shielded for what she did. "Gussie's handsome, colorful face

showed shocked disapproval. "Why, she has acted just like a regular old politician who goes around before election day and buys votes!"

Gussie's comparison raised a laugh in which Marjorie joined. Long ago she and Robin had come to that conclusion.

"Well, we won't ever say a word about her outside the Travelers," she said, her face sobering. "Everything's going nicely again. Now, children, my tale's told. Jerry says you have something on your minds. Go sit on that couch, three in a row, and spout forth your news." Marjorie indicated her couch bed. "If you don't care to sit there, why, here is our assortment of chairs." She grandly pointed them out.

"Let Gus tell it. She began it," declared Flossie. "The three friends had bumped themselves down on the couch with much interference one with another and little bursts of laughter.

"Your fairy-tale Princess and Leslie Cairns had a fuss at the Colonial today. They were together there when the three of us went into the place for ices." Gussie said in matter-of-fact tones. "Miss Monroe was ripping mad. We heard her say that something wasn't true, and that she wouldn't be bullied. She was so angry she talked louder than she intended. I think she knew it for all in a

minute she dropped her voice away down. I wanted to be the one to tell you about this, Marjorie, for a certain reason." Her tone was flattering to Marjorie's dignity.

"Speak, Gentleman Gus," laughed Marjorie, amused by the very solemn expression of Gussie's face.

"Just because Miss Monroe was opposed to me at class election is no sign that I should have any hard feeling toward her," Gussie began. "I haven't. I know you think she's going to—to—well, be more congenial some day. She won't be, though, if she keeps on associating with Miss Cairns. She'll begin to break rules, too. First thing she knows she'll do something serious and be expelled from Hamilton. I can't forget how sweet she looked the other night at the hop. I thought, since she seemed to be peeved with Miss Cairns that maybe you could think of some way to link her to Hamilton. So she'll like the campus better than she does Leslie Cairns."

"I have thought of a way, Gussie," Marjorie's eyes sparkled. At last she had a supporter in the cause of the difficult fairy-tale princess.

"We ought to forget there is any such person," Calista said. "After the way she reported us for being noisy on the day we got here. But you see

what forgiving natures we have." She gave a whimsical little shrug and smile.

"I decided to forget that she reported us," came from Gussie magnanimously. "She's awfully thorny and hard to approach. She doesn't seem to care much for Miss Peyton and Miss Carter. They make great effort toward being chummy with her."

"Leila knows I'd like to have a Beauty contest; the kind of one she got up when we were freshmen and she and Vera were sophs," Marjorie told them animatedly. "If we had one—"

"Good old M. M. thinks the Ice Queen would win it. That would let M. M. out of being the college beauty—so she innocently schemes," translated Jerry. "We'd still be privileged to our own opinion, Ahem." She coughed suggestively. Next instant she had gone to the door in answer to a rapping on it.

"You're just in time," she greeted, stepping back to allow Leila to enter.

"In time for what, may I ask?" Leila's bright blue eyes roved speculatively about the room.

"For the Beauty contest," returned Calista promptly.

"Then I must have won it. I see no one half as beautiful as myself here," was Leila's modest opin-

ion. "But have you seen Vera? Midget is gone, unless you may be hiding her away in some small corner."

"She went to town with Phil. Robin and I met them when we came from Baretti's." Marjorie continued with a brief account of Robin's and her call at the inn.

"Once more she has dropped her gold into the sea," was Leila's thoroughly Irish comment. "It is the same old story, Beauty. She never wins."

"Bean hopes to be Bean without beauty," Jerry said briskly to Leila. "Can it be done?"

"I shall have to consult the stars." Leila rolled her eyes mysteriously at Marjorie.

"Never mind me, Leila, won't you please help me about the Beauty contest. You know why I am so determined to have it. Gussie feels the same as I do about Miss Monroe. So does Calista. I've two on my side."

"Count me in, Bean. Never forget your friend." Jerry sprang to Marjorie's support.

"And me," echoed Flossie Hart.

"I'm sorry, Beauty, but I can't help you with the contest." Leila pursed her lips and shook her black head. "Now, why should you bother your head about it?"

"Because I think it is the one thing to do for

Miss Monroe. I want to do it, Leila. Why won't you help me?" Marjorie sent Leila a puzzled, almost hurt glance.

"Why won't I help you? Because—" Leila's smile burst forth from her sober face like sunlight through a cloud—"I shall be busy managing the Beauty contest myself."

CHAPTER XXI.

NEWS FROM MISS SUSANNA

"I'm going out to mail a letter," Jerry told Marjorie, when, later, the girls had gone to their own rooms.

"How nice. You may have the pleasure of mailing two for me," Marjorie reached in the table drawer for the letters. "I put them in the drawer for safe keeping and went out without them," she explained.

"Hand them over." Jerry took them and was gone. She had decided to say nothing to anyone about the letter she had written to Louise Walker until she had seen the outcome. Like the sleuth she had laughingly vowed to be, at the time when Marjorie had received the letter from Louise Walker and also the one signed "Senior sports' committee," she preferred to keep matters a secret until she had completed her case.

On the way back across the campus from the nearest mail box she saw a mail carrier leaving the

Hall. In going out she had noted that the bulletin board in the hall was empty of mail. Now a flock of letters roosted in its alphabetical, shallow pockets. Near the top under D she plucked one for Marjorie addressed in Miss Susanna Hamilton's individual hand.

"You're in luck," Jerry said as she entered the room to find Marjorie sitting at the table, elbows braced upon it, hands cupping her chin. A rare old book on chemistry lay near her on the table. It had been given her by Miss Hamilton during her senior year at Hamilton. She had brought it from her bookshelf to read. Instead she had fallen into a reverie concerning the giver of the book. Miss Susanna had told her that it was the only copy of the work on chemistry known to be in the United States. It had belonged to Mr. Brooke Hamilton. Marjorie could hardly believe at times that she was actually in possession of a book that had belonged to the founder of Hamilton College.

"Why am I in luck?" Marjorie's head was quickly raised from her hands. "I never seem to be much out of it, Jeremiah. I have so much more of happiness than I deserve."

"There's a reason." The envelope in Jerry's hand dropped on the table in front of Marjorie.

"Oh-h-h!" Marjorie exultantly snatched up the

letter. "I was just thinking of her, Jerry. I've had only one letter from her since she has been in New York. Doesn't it seem odd to think of Miss Susanna as being in New York? She's been away from the Arms almost six weeks, too."

Marjorie's hands were already busy with the envelope. She drew from it the folded letter, spread it open and glanced eagerly at the headlines. Then she read aloud to Jerry who had seated herself on one end of the table, feet swinging free.

"My Dearest Child:

"I am still in this roaring, clattering, over-populated city they call New York. I shall be glad to see the last of it. It has changed a good deal since I visited it twenty years ago. This is the day of motor vehicles, skyscrapers and crowded streets filled with strange foreign faces. I long to be home to that haven of peace, the Arms.

"There is no use in attempting to tell you by letter of my stay in the metropolis. I am coming home on Tuesday, December fourth. Will you and Jerry come to the Arms to dinner on Wednesday evening? I should have written you more often, but I have been very busy by day and tired by night. At any rate I have seen the New York of today. But I could never grow used to the

helter-skelter, rush-and-a-bounce way of living that appears to prevail here.

"Give my love to my girls with my fond devotion for yourself.

"SUSANNA CRAIG HAMILTON."

"She'll be home tomorrow. Oh, goody!" Marjorie sprang from her chair and essayed a little prancing step about the room, looking like a delighted youngster. Miss Susanna's pet name of "child" was particularly applicable.

"And Wednesday we'll see her!" Jerry contributed a few hops and skips to the dance Marjorie had started. The two met, clasped each other and the dance became wilder. Breathless and laughing, they landed with a bang against the door. They managed for a moment to keep out Ronny who was at the door, hand on the knob, when the dancers crashed against it.

"I got in, even if you did try to hold the door against me," she asserted with twinkling eyes.

"My, but you are suspicious!" Jerry accused. "That's not the way we treat our friends. Didn't you know it?"

"Am I really your friend?" Ronny asked with gushing sweetness.

"You were, you are, but you won't be long if

you ask me any more such foolish questions."

"Miss Susanna will be home tomorrow, Ronny," Marjorie said happily. "She sent her love to you girls. Here's her letter. I'm sure she'd like you to read it." Marjorie was still holding the letter. She now handed it to Ronny.

Ronny took it and quickly read it. "Why did she go to New York, I wonder, after having stayed so long away from it?" she squestioned half musingly. "It would take an especially strong reason to draw her away from the Arms for six weeks."

"Whatever the reason may have been, we'll probably know it tomorrow evening," Jerry commented. "It wouldn't surprise me if she'd been planning something for the dormitory and had had to go to New York to find just what she wanted."

"We don't wish her to do anything more for the dormitory," Marjorie said sturdily. "She has done too much for us already."

"Precisely my opinion. You won't let me throw my money around in the dormitory cause. Why should Miss Susanna be allowed to do what I'm not?" Ronny propounded with one of her dazzling, patronizing smiles.

"I call for a change of subject," laughed Marjorie.

"And my question not answered," Ronny sighed plaintively.

"The answer to your question is the road to argument." Marjorie cannily shook a finger at Veronica.

"All right. You've suppressed me for the time being. Never fear. I'll bob up again on the finance question when you least expect it," she made cheerful prediction.

"It's a sweet, precious pet, and it sha'n't be suppressed." Marjorie reached out and stroked Ronny's arm.

"That's what you call Ruffle when you are trying to coax him to jump through your arms. You can't hope that I'll be much impressed by such blarney," Ronny pointed out with hastily assumed dignity. "I'm going to leave you now. I came here for a purpose, but I've forgotten what it was. I'll have to go back to our room and consult Luciferous. Luckily, I confided in her before starting out." Ronny flitted from the room in her graceful, light-footed fashion.

"I wish I could see fluffy old Ruffle and squabble with him and General for our favorite chair." Marjorie's eyes grew suddenly wistful. "And, Captain! I miss her most of all. More so this year than I did before I was graduated."

"I miss Father and Mother sometimes, but Hal is the one I miss." Jerry's color heightened a little as she mentioned her brother's name to Marjorie. "You know Hal and I were pally at home. Outside the house he was always with the boys, but inside we spent many hours together. He taught me to box, fence, swim and ride. And during the past two summers at the beach you've seen for yourself how much we have been together."

During the short Thanksgiving vacation in Sanford Jerry had been faintly encouraged by Marjorie's warmly cordial manner to Hal. The strain between them which her keen intuition had detected when at the beach had vanished. As a matter of fact, Marjorie welcomed the four days of pleasure and happiness at home as a release from responsibility. She wished to think of nothing but home and its charms. She hailed Hal frankly as her cavalier of old and treated him with all the gay graciousness of her first acquaintance with him.

Hal was too deeply in love with Marjorie not to understand her. He knew that she was not behaving toward him according to some carefully laid plan of her own. Her overflowing gaiety was spontaneous. She was like a blithe, lovely child, full of the joy of living, who looked to him to be

her playmate. So Hal made a Herculean effort to crowd the love she did not want into his heart and close the door upon it. He resolutely forbade himself to think of her as other than his old-time "girl."

"Hal is the finest young man I ever met, or ever expect to meet," Marjorie said with an energy of enthusiasm far removed from love. "I hope he will find a girl who is as splendid as he is, and marry her. I wish Hal would fall in love with Ronny, and Ronny with Hal. They would be worthy of each other."

Marjorie laughed as she caught the variety of expressions struggling for place on Jerry's round face. "You look so funny, Jeremiah."

"Can you wonder? Ronny never occurred to me in the light of a sister-in-law." Jerry's variegated expression dissolved in a broad smile. "You take my breath. I'll have to mention it to her when she comes in again. Her views on the subject might give me another shock."

"Jerry Macy, if you do, I'll—I'll—" Marjorie caught Jerry by her well-cushioned shoulders and began to shake her with playful force. "Don't you dare, Jeremiah." She emphasized her words with little shakes. "Promise me you won't."

"What do you take me for?" Jerry asked re-

proachfully. "I'd never have the nerve to mention old Hal to Ronny. No, Marvelous Match Maker, you'll never be able to marry Hal off so easily as that. There are scads and oodles and slathers of lovely girls in the world, but there's one grand reason why none of them will ever give me a glad hand as a sister-in-law. Hal saw you first."

CHAPTER XXII.

HOME AGAIN

"YES, little girls, I'm so glad to be home again! I've been outdoors tramping around the estate since early this morning. Do give me another cup of tea, Jerry." Miss Susanna had ordered the dinner dessert served in the tea room with tea as an after-dinner beverage instead of coffee.

"Yours truly." Jerry refilled the thin priceless cup, it belonged to the famous Chinese tea set, and offered it to Miss Susanna.

"It has seemed so strange without you, Miss Susanna." Marjorie bent affectionate eyes on the upright little figure in black silk. "Not to see you for six weeks during the college year is a long time now."

"So it is; so it is," nodded the old lady. "I had no intention of leaving the Arms for that shrieking demon of noise, New York. The last time you had tea with me, Marjorie, was just before Hallowe'en. I was thinking then about having a Hallowe'en

frolic for you girls. Then Jonas brought me a letter from an old friend of mine who lives in New York. In the letter he mentioned something so interesting that it set me to thinking hard. The upshot of it was I told Jonas I intended to go to New York. He nearly collapsed with amazement." Miss Susanna chuckled at the recollection of Jonas's unbelieving surprise. "When I went on to tell him why I was going he was as much pleased with my plan as I was."

Miss Hamilton paused. Her alert dark eyes were dancing with some secret of her own which gave promise of being signally amusing. Jerry and Marjorie knew the signs. Miss Susanna was on the verge of imparting to them something in the nature of a pleasant surprise. Jerry's surmise of the afternoon that the last of the Hamiltons had gone to New York in the interests of the dormitory flashed into the minds of both girls.

"The odd feature of the whole affair is, Jonas has been elected to go to New York, now that I've returned to the Arms." Miss Susanna's gleeful, child-like chuckle was heard. "Poor Jonas. He looked so horrified when I informed him of what I had in store for him."

"Shall we inquire what it's all about?" Jerry

flashed Marjorie the pretense of a bewildered glance.

"It's the only way we'll ever find out," sighed Marjorie in an exaggeratedly hopeless tone. "Unless we pounce upon Jonas in the hall and bully him into telling us." She turned the merest fraction of a glance on Miss Hamilton as she proposed this violent means of obtaining information.

"A good plan," heartily approved Jerry. "I'll improve upon it. I suggest that we rush him, or anyone else around here who may happen to know something we don't, but would like to know. Let's begin now."

"Come on." Marjorie rose and brandished two bare, smooth, dimpled arms threateningly in Miss Susanna's direction. Jerry followed suit, even more menacing of gesture. Her ridiculous, desperado thrust of chin, the slow, determined advance of the pair upon the little, bright-eyed figure in the chair further added to the astonishment of Jonas as he suddenly appeared in the tea room to refill the tea-pot.

"I guess I got here just in time," he slyly declared, his mouth drawing into a humorous pucker as he picked up the tea-pot to refill it with fresh tea.

"In time to land yourself in difficulties; not to

save me," Miss Susanna told him between chuckles. "We're both threatened with attack, Jonas, unless we stand and deliver our great secret."

Miss Susanna had thrown herself into the spirit of the bit of by-play with the merry zest of a child. Since she had known Marjorie and the light-hearted, fun-loving coterie of Hamilton girls she had appeared to grow younger and younger. That particular, congenial galaxy of youth Miss Susanna had taken to her heart as a charm against crabbed old age.

"Maybe we'd better not make any resistance, Miss Susanna," Jonas advised with a timid air. It reduced the two desperadoes to a state of giggles which utterly broke up their threatening aspect.

"Maybe we hadn't," the old lady agreed with brisk amusement. "You sit down at the table with us and have a cup of tea, Jonas. There's safety in numbers." She graciously waved Jonas into the one vacant chair of the four around the table. Had he been her elder brother instead of her major-domo of many years she could not have treated him with more kindly affection.

"It's mean in me to tease you children," she said, flashing her guests one of her bright smiles. "Forgive me. I'm really going to tell you all about it now."

"The past is forgot," Jerry moaned ungrammatically.

"Thank you," Miss Susanna responded gratefully. "I was hoping it might be. Now for the tale of my adventures in New York. My lawyer, who was young when I was, left Hamilton many year ago and established himself in New York. His name is Richard Henry Garrett. He never married. During our younger days we lost track of each other. Later we met again and after Uncle Brooke's death I engaged him to attend to the legalities of the estate. Uncle Brooke's lawyer died shortly after my great uncle's decease.

"Since the laying of the dormitory corner stone last fall," Miss Susanna continued, "I have often wondered what I could give the girls who are to live there that would be of use and benefit to all. When the dormitory is completed I shall carry out a certain wish of Uncle Brooke's of which at present I prefer not to speak. What I was anxious to do was something personal for the girls' welfare. In the midst of my quandary I received my old friend Richard's letter. I had not finished reading it when the very idea I was seeking came to me. Let me read you the paragraph of his letter which furnished my inspiration."

Miss Susanna drew from an ornamental ruffled

silk pocket of her skirt the folded sheets of a letter. She unfolded them; hunted them for the desired paragraph. She quickly found it and read in her brisk tones:

" 'Since you used to be greatly interested in old and rare books you will remember the Ellerton's fine private library which I once took you to see when you were in New York. It is to be sold soon, at auction, as a whole. The elder Ellertons have died and the heirs to the Ellerton estate prefer to convert the library into cash. It appears to be the chief aim of the rising generation to convert everything of beauty and worth, which has a monetary value, into dollars, regardless of tradition. So that splendid monument to learning, Steven Ellerton's library, will come under the auctioneer's hammer next month.' "

"I'm sure the Ellerton library *couldn't* be finer than the Hamilton Arms' library," Marjorie said in loyal defense of the remarkable collection of volumes gathered together by Brooke Hamilton.

"It is not as complete, if I remember rightly," Miss Susanna said, looking pleased at Marjorie's staunch opinion. "Uncle Brooke has some rare Chinese and Japanese books and a collection of Spanish incunabula which I know the Ellerton library lacks, as well as a good many other rare

and curious books of which he possessed the only known copies."

Miss Susanna's face broke into a little, amused smile as she glanced from one to the other of the two girls.

"You girls must surely understand by this time what my inspiration was. You both look a trifle bewildered. Can't you add two and two, children?" she asked playfully. "You ought to know the result."

"But it's such an overwhelming result, Miss Susanna!" Marjorie drew a long breath. "Two, which stands for the dormitory girls, plus, two, which stands for the Ellerton library make—" Marjorie paused. She gazed at Miss Hamilton, her eyes bright as stars. "It's too wonderful even to think about;—until I grow more used to the idea. It's too great a gift, Miss Susanna, after all you've already done for the dormitory project."

"Nonsense. Nothing is too great for me to give, provided I have it to give, and feel like giving it," declared the old lady brusquely. "I like the idea of the dormitory having its own library. I have only one request to make concerning it. I'd like to have the library named the Brooke Hamilton Dormitory Library."

"Just as though we *could* give it another name!"

Marjorie exclaimed with fond fervor. "I'd say it ought to be named for you but I know you would rather use Mr. Brooke's name."

"Of course I should." Miss Hamilton gave an emphatic little nod of the head. "I shouldn't like the 'Susanna Hamilton Dormitory Library,' as a name. Should you, child?"

"Yes; I should," Marjorie disagreed with affectionate frankness. Jerry echoed the opinion.

"You're a couple of nice children. I appreciate your loyal approval," Miss Susanna told them. Her tones took on an odd grimness as she added: "My name shall not appear in connection with a Hamilton College movement, however worthy it may be. In the case of his name, there's a difference. He had the right to hope that his name might be perpetuated in the college his genius and benevolence raised up."

" 'The college his genius and benevolence raised up,' " Marjorie meditatively repeated. "How beautiful that would be in a biography of Mr. Brooke Hamilton." She flushed, but looked bravely at Miss Susanna. She had, in thus speaking, obeyed an irresistible impulse.

Answering color signals displayed themselves in the old lady's cheeks. A frown sprang to her brows. It disappeared almost instantly. Her alert dark

eyes grew tender. "It was a fortunate day for Hamilton when a certain curly-haired little girl first set foot on the campus. Why not call the new dormitory the Marjorie Dean Dormitory? The dream dormitory that Marjorie Dean's unselfish work made a reality. That's what Uncle Brooke would say if he were here."

"How I love you for saying that, Miss Susanna, about Mr. Brooke Hamilton!" Marjorie cried happily. "But I think Robin has done more hard work than I to make the dormitory a reality. It should be named for her."

"*Don't you ever believe it,* Miss Susanna." Jerry laid emphasis on each word. "Marvelous Manager began it. Robin is a close second, though. The 'dorm' ought to be called the Page and Dean Dormitory. Sounds something like a business directory, but it tells the story. And the great beauty of it is this:—it includes both distinguished promoters." Jerry directed a refulgent smile at Marjorie, who promptly made a saucy mouth at her.

"The Page and Dean Dormitory," repeated Miss Susanna with a humorous glance at Jerry. "I rather like the sound of the combination. You're right about it, Jerry. When one has two such retiring persons to deal with as Marjorie and Robin it becomes necessary to drag them both to the front. So

be it. Now for Uncle Brooke's study and our library catalogues. Only a limited number of them were issued. I wish you had been with me at the auction. There was some very brisk bidding at first. There were perhaps a dozen wealthy New York men interested in the auction. Richard Garrett represented me. I had nothing to do but keep quiet and listen to the bidding.

Miss Hamilton continued to relate in her abrupt, lively way the interesting circumstances of the auction as they left the Chinese room and stepped into the lift which Jonas manipulated for them.

"Send Selma to clear away the tea things, Jonas," she ordered as she stepped from the tiny elevator. "Then come to the study. You must go over the catalogues with us. Nothing like familiarizing yourself with the books you are going to pack."

Jonas disappeared with alacrity. He returned as speedily to the study, an utterly pleased smile decorating his placid, old face. He was immensely proud of being invited to make a fourth member of the group in the study.

The four friends sat at the massive, claw-legged library table and were soon deep in exploring the copies of the auction catalogue with which Miss Hamilton had supplied them. They read by snatches, browsing avidly here and there among

the descriptive pages; exclaiming exultantly over one rare book or another which they discovered listed there.

"I'm positively dizzy with pride and vanity over the dormitory's wonder of a present!" Marjorie's eyes gleamed like stars. There was a wealth of feeling in her gratefully gay utterance. Presently, she allowed the catalogue to drop from her hands to the table. She sat gazing at the erect little figure on the opposite side of the table with boundless affection. "I'm sure *you* must love the dream dormitory that you helped make a reality as dearly as we Travelers do," she said fervently.

"We'll say I have nothing against it," Miss Susanna said dryly. "Why should I? It's not on the campus." She cast a defiant glance about her. "But we'll not go into that subject. Back to our library. Having acquired it, the next thing to do is to get it here." The independent donor declined to hear of her own generosity. "You'd best start for New York in the morning, Jonas," was her next terse remark.

"What train, Miss Susanna?" Jonas inquired imperturbably.

"An early morning train. One that will bring you into New York, it ought to be called New

Pandemonium Let Loose, while daylight lasts," the old lady pithily replied.

Jerry and Marjorie were both smiling openly at the sudden imperative order Miss Susanna had launched at Jonas, and its tranquil reception.

"Yes, Jonas, for goodness sake don't get lost in the wilds of New York after dark," Jerry warned with a chuckle. I hope you know who's who, what's what and where's where in the metropolis."

"I don't; but I suppose I'll have to learn." Jonas echoed the chuckle. His highly cheerful expression evidenced the coming detail as being quite to his taste. "New York's not much like it was when I was a young man and Mr. Brooke took me there with him once for a trip."

Two pairs of bright eyes were turned on Jonas with an expression which bordered on reverence. It was something to marvel at—that this stately old man with his crown of thick, snowy hair had been the chosen traveling companion of Brooke Hamilton on a trip to New York. Miss Susanna watched them understandingly, experiencing a secret happiness in the unconscious girlish tribute offered her distinguished kinsman.

"It won't take Jonas long to find his bearings," she confidently predicted. "With the help of two or three workmen he can pack the library in short

order. It will have to be stored at the Arms when it arrives, until the dormitory is completed. Jonas will see to having it shipped to the Arms by motor van. That will save time and extra handling. I want it here and off my mind before Christmas. I have received an invitation from a dear friend to spend Christmas with her and her family. I am thinking of accepting it."

Miss Susanna peered mysteriously over her glasses at Marjorie and Jerry. She did not offer to divulge the name of the friend. Jonas raised a hand to his mouth as though to brush away a smile that flickered briefly upon his lips.

"Truly, Miss Susanna?" Marjorie cried out her pleasure of the announcement. Each year since she had come to know the old lady well she had invited her to spend the Christmas holidays at Castle Dean. On each occasion Miss Susanna had flatly refused to leave the Arms over the holidays, declaring that she would not consider the idea of passing Christmas Day away from her ancestral home.

"Yes, truly. You won't need to worry this Christmas about my being lonely, child. I'm going back on my vow of years' standing. I've found something stronger even than my love for the Arms. I've found the love of friends." There was

exultant triumph in Miss Hamilton's forceful speech.

"I'm so glad," Marjorie assured with hearty sincerity. Her cheery smile further conveyed her unenvious spirit at the news. She could only be glad because Miss Susanna had found such a boon. She surmised that through the friendly offices of Richard Garrett Miss Hamilton had come in touch again with the woman friend of whom she had just spoken. They had of course met in New York.

"Did you meet your friend in New York, Miss Susanna?" Jerry's surprised curiosity got the better of her. "I don't mean to be an old curiosity shop," she instantly apologized, half laughing. "I scented an interesting story. I thought you might have met a girl chum whom you hadn't seen for years and years."

"No, Jerry; I did not meet my friend in New York." Miss Susanna tried vainly to keep a sober face. The battery of bright, wondering eyes turned upon her proved too much for her. She laughed; a high, joyful little laugh in which Jonas' deeper notes of amusement mingled. "I first met my friend on the road to the Arms; not such a long while ago," she said with tender pride. "The interesting story of our friendship began with a broken basket handle and a young girl's gracious

courtesy toward a crusty old woman. I was very fortunate in meeting her. She turned out to be a royal young person who lived in a castle in the far country of Sanford. Since I've known her she's often invited me to spend Christmas at Castle Dean. I've stayed at the Arms when I might have been happy in the royal palace of the King and Queen of Dean. I—"

"Miss Susanna!" Marjorie and Jerry were now on their feet with a concerted jubilant shriek.

"Wait a second." Miss Hamilton briefly warded off the impending, tumultous embrace of two energetic pairs of arms. "One more remark; then you may hug me hard. Like all the rest of the world, I hope to be happy at Christmas time. I know I shall be—at Castle Dean."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERY

"No, Beauty, I haven't gone back on my word. How can you harbor such suspicions against a fine old Irish gentleman like myself? Such a regard as I have for you, yet you will doubt me." Leila Harper rolled reproachfully sentimental eyes at Marjorie. "Since it is a Beauty contest you demand, your Celtic friend will rise to the occasion."

"I wish you'd rise soon then." Marjorie met Leila's effusive promise with a coaxing smile.

"Name the day and the hour." Leila gave vent to a resigned groan, quite at variance with her fulsome mood of the moment before.

"There you go. One minute you blow hot; the next cold." Marjorie shook an arraigning finger before Leila's face. "I'm going to take you at your word and name the day and hour. The day will be next Friday. The hour, eight P.M. The place, the gym, the promoters of the contest—" Mar-

jorie paused with a dubious, questioning look toward Leila.

"Aye, Beauty; there's the rub!" Leila exclaimed. "The contest ought to be pulled off by either the sophs or freshies. We P. G.'s are beyond such trifling vanities. So some would be pleased to say we should be. Now we come to the reason why of things. I'm wisely in favor of letting the sophs perpetrate the beauty walk."

"My own opinion," Marjorie concurred. "How would you turn it over to them and still manage it, Leila. I mean the details. Only *you* know how to manage a Beauty contest like the one you got up long ago."

"I'm going to be the power behind the throne and manage the contest through the Bertram girls," Leila made shrewd declaration. "They are popular sophs. Besides they will do as I tell them. They'll not spoil my fine arrangements." Leila favored Marjorie with a whimsical grin. "Let me warn you, beforehand, Beauty. It will be dangerous for you to attend the contest."

"Your warning is wasted. I shall sit in the gallery and watch the Beauty parade. Not because I imagine for a minute that I—that I—" Marjorie stammered, growing suddenly rosy with confusion.

"That you would certainly win it if you appeared on the gym floor," Leila finished with mischievous affability. "No fair decorating the gallery, Beauty. It's a most important part you must play on the floor."

"No, designing villain. You dragged me into one Beauty contest; but never again." She wagged a decisive head at Leila who merely continued to beam on her.

"This time I have a fine plan for you," Leila continued, unabashed. "You are to be one of the judges. I'll paint lines of age on your lovely face; give you a snow-white frizzy wig and a shapeless brown bag of a gown to wear. Even your captain could not pick you out as a Dean. Now tell me, am I not your devoted Irish friend?" she demanded ingratiatingly.

"You're a jewel, Leila Greatheart." Marjorie's face grew radiant. "The very thing I'll like best. I'd forgotten all about the judges. Their were three of them at the other contest. It seems ages since that night, doesn't it?"

Leila nodded. "Happy ages," she said, a soft light shining from her bright blue eyes. "And you were not pleased with me that night, Beauty, for putting you in your rightful place on the campus."

"No, I wasn't," Marjorie replied with smiling

candor. "I recall that I was almost angry with you. I thought you did it merely to nettle the Sans. I thought you were very clever, but I wasn't sure whether or not I truly liked you."

"Ah, but I have won dozens of golden opinions from you, Beauty, since then. I will tell you something quite remarkable about myself. I am never disliked by a person who likes me." Leila made the statement with due impressiveness.

"I'll tell you something else. You're an affable old fake, and I've been here just one-half hour longer than I intended to be." Marjorie rose from the chair she had been occupying in Leila's and Vera's room. "I needed that half hour for a bout with a terrific bit of old French poetry. Now it's gone—the hour, I mean. I wish the poetry was nil, too! And I've not opened my book! It's almost dinner time, and after dinner we're due at Silverton Hall to help Robin rehearse that house play. You hadn't forgotten about it, had you?"

"I never forget anything I happen to remember," was the re-assuring response.

"Then keep on remembering the Beauty contest," begged Marjorie laughing. "This is Monday. I wish you *could* arrange it for Friday night. I'm so anxious for Miss Monroe to win it. It will strengthen her position on the campus." Her love-

ly face grew suddenly serious. "You know so well the way I feel about her, Leila. I'd love to have her free herself from Leslie Cairns' influence; to help her raise up a pride in herself that will place her above doing the contemptible things the Sans used to do."

As she talked Marjorie's voice took on a wistful earnestness which Leila found irresistible. She did not share Marjorie's views concerning Doris Monroe. Nevertheless, Marjorie's appeal to Leila for help in the difficult conquest of the more difficult sophomore was in itself sufficient cause for co-operation on Leila's part.

"Watch the bulletin board tomorrow, and have no fears," was Leila's parting advice as Marjorie reached the door. "We shall meet again," she added portentously.

"In about ten minutes; at dinner. And in my room, after dinner; and after that, on the campus; and still after that, at Silverton Hall," flung back Marjorie over a shoulder as she went out the door. She ran lightly down the hall to her room, inspirited by Leila's promise. She swung open the door with a gay little fling and entered to find Jerry deep in the perusal of a letter.

"I'm going to be one of the judges at the Beauty contest," she breezily informed Jerry. "I forgot to

ask Leila who she'd picked for the other two judges."

"It's a good thing for the Ice Queen that you are going to wear a disguise; efface your face from the college map for the time being," Jerry commented, eyes still on her letter. "No judge rig-out for Jeremiah, I shall appear in all my fatal beauty. But I don't expect to get a fair deal," Jerry sighed loudly. "When is the momentous Beauty gathering to grace the gym?"

"Friday evening at eight." Marjorie went on to recount hers and Leila's recent conversation.

"You old politician. You've everything fixed for your candidate," Jerry humorously accused. "What *has* become of the traditions of Hamilton? Shocking!"

"They're *right in the foreground,* AS ALWAYS," retorted Marjorie. "I'm neither old, nor a politician. *Nothing* has been fixed for my candidate. Yes; I'll admit I have one," she declared in answer to Jerry's comically questioning glance. "Just the same, she can only succeed on her own merits. Giving her a chance to do that isn't pulling strings for her."

"I get you, Bean. I humbly apologize for any dark suspicions I may have entertained against you. You are a Bean of rare pulchritude, enterprise and

integrity. You are not the only enterprising person on the campus, though. I hate to speak of myself, but—er-her-r, ahem!" Jerry loudly cleared her throat. "I'm a credit to the noble profession of the sleuth." Her tone of raillery held an undernote of triumph. Her round face wore a victorious expression which Marjorie did not miss.

"What is it, Jeremiah?" You're brim full of something interesting. "I know you're aching to tell me. Do go ahead."

"It's about those two letters," Jerry began abruptly. "I mean the two that were sent to you in the fall when the sophs were warring among themselves, and Gentleman Gus drew the class presidency."

"I haven't forgotten them," Marjorie said dryly. "You said you'd find out all about them. Have you?" She gazed interestedly at Jerry. "Now I begin to understand why you were praising yourself," she tacked on, with a teasing smile. "You'll have just time to tell me before the dinner gong sounds. Go to it." She dropped easily down upon her couch bed, eyes still intent on Jerry.

"You know, and so do I, that the sports committee letter was a fake. We decided that first thing. Well, I've not discovered who wrote it. I'm still suspicious of three different sets of girls

on the campus. But I haven't a shred of proof against any of them. Being an honorable sleuth I don't prowl ignobly about the campus after my quarry. I set legitimate traps for 'em. I deduce in a scientific and marvelous manner. My methods are above reproach, but they take time."

"So do your remarks," Marjorie impolitely reminded. "The gong's going to ring very, very soon."

"Oh, is it? So glad you told me. My, but you are rude at times. This is one of 'em. Back to my subject. I never believed that Miss Walker wrote the letter to you signed with her name. I made up my mind to find out whether the handwriting was hers, but I failed to capture a specimen of her penmanship. I tried a half a dozen nice, lady-like little schemes. Not one worked. One day luck was with Jeremiah. I picked up a fine and fussy handkerchief, monogramed, L.M.W."

With one eye on the clock Jerry hurriedly recounted the writing of the note to Louise Walker and the subequent mailing of it and the handkerchief to the sophomore.

"Here's the answer. Found it in the bulletin board this P. M. Look at it. Next cast your eyes over this piece of bunk." Jerry laid two unfolded letters on the study table for Marjorie to examine.

Marjorie obediently left the couch where she had cosily disposed her slim length. She reached Jerry's side with one lithe bounce. Hastily she picked up the letter Jerry indicated. Then she read:

"Dear Miss Macy:

"How fortunate for me that you should have found my pet handkerchief! I bought it in Europe last summer of one of those wonderful Belgian lace makers. I prize it highly on account of the beauty of the embroidery. Consequently I rarely carry it. Broke my rule for once and lost it. I had no idea where. It is my good luck, and quite remarkable, I think, that you should have guessed the initials on it to be mine. Thank you for your courtesy. Assuring you of my appreciation,

"Yours very sincerely,

"Louise May Walker."

As she finished reading Miss Walker's impersonally friendly note of thanks Marjorie's eyes immediately sought the other letter. It was the hateful letter she had received directly after the sophomore election from Miss Walker. She had read it enough times to know it by heart.

"Why, Jerry!" she cried, letting the two letters flutter from her hand to the table. "She—Miss

Walker—never wrote that miserably mean letter to me! It's not written in the same hand as the note she wrote you about the handkerchief. We feel quite positive she wrote that note. So she couldn't have written the other."

"Of course she didn't write it," Jerry asserted. "I've been keeping an explorative P. G. eye on her since the basket ball season began. She has some fine traits, Marjorie." Jerry nodded her head in sober confirmation of her opinion.

"I'm glad she didn't write this." Marjorie touched the condemnatory letter with the tip of a finger. She picked up both letters again and proceeded to a critical examination of the handwriting of each.

"I couldn't be sure she had not until I had seen her handwriting. I hadn't the least excuse for writing her, and I didn't care to ask the girls to do it. I'd begun to harbor dark thoughts of waylaying her on the campus in the misty twilight and appropriating her note-book. She had a twice-a-week late trig period at Hamilton Hall. Then I found the handkerchief in the main corridor. Maybe Jeremiah wasn't pleased with herself!" Jerry gave an elated little spin around on one heel. "I wrote her and enclosed the hankey, and this is the reward of

honesty plus great forethought." Jerry significantly tapped her forehead.

"I'm glad," Marjorie said again; "glad you are a great detective, Jeremiah." She smiled indulgently at Jerry. "But gladder still that Miss Walker never wrote that spiteful letter. I'm gladdest of all that it is more despicable even than if it were anonymous. It's a forgery. A person so unprincipled as to commit such a forgery is too unprincipled to be dangerous."

"Pearls of truth and wisdom, Bean. I get you, and agree with you," Jerry returned the smile. "I hate to say it, but I know only one person who could qualify under that head—Leslie Hob-goblin Cairns."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HELPING THE GOOD WORK ALONG

THE warning, brazen voice of the dinner gong, which Miss Remson rang but once before each meal, broke in upon Jerry's pertinent surmise. It was a signal which called for postponing further conjecture in the matter.

"I've thought of Leslie Cairns more than once, Jerry, in connection with both those letters," Marjorie confessed as Jerry took the letters Marjorie had carefully examined, folded them and tucked them into a small leather portfolio. "Perhaps it's been unfair in me to judge her by past performances"

"How could one help it? Come along, self-accusing Bean. I'm hungry enough to eat all the dinner on our table, and give the rest of you not a scrap. We'll continue our amazing careers as private investigators tonight after the ten-thirty bell is heard in the land and a grateful hush has settled down on Room 15."

During the busy, merry evening spent with Robin, Phil and the cast of Silverton Hall payers, Marjorie had neither inclination nor opportunity to consider the guilt or non-guilt of Leslie Cairns. As stage manager Leila Harper combined more than usual efficiency with a drollness of speech and manner which kept the amateur thespians in a constant gale of giggles.

"Remember your cues and lines, or you'll be walking into the middle scenes where you're neither expected nor wanted," she warned her flock.

The play, a two-act comedy entitled "The House Party," was a bright, snappy little production written by Eileen Potter, a promising Silverton Hall sophomore. Phil had advocated the first production of it as a house play. The sophomore class would be the guests of the Silverton Hall sophs on the eventful evening. The living room was to be turned into a theatre. Phil had enlisted Robin's, Marjorie's and Leila's services in rehearsing it.

Her plan, into which Robin, Marjorie and Leila gladly entered, had a triple motive. She was anxious that Eileen's talent should be recognized on the campus. She was determined that the unharmonious sophomore class should be brought into harmony. She intended to hammer away at this plan until she accomplished that harmony. Last of

all, she liked giving house plays. Phil had a soul even more bent on democracy than was that of Marjorie, if such a condition could be. Robin often said to her: "Truly, Phil, if you had lived in the days of '76 you would have managed somehow to annex your name to the Declaration of Independence."

After the rehearsal the hard-working actors, managers and prompters were treated to frozen custard and sponge cake by Barbara Severn. She declared Leila to be a slave-driver and that the custard and cake were needed by the cast as nourishment

"If I am a slave-driver, why is it you are offering me custard and cake?" Leila demanded, as Barbara presented her with a plate of the frozen sweet.

"Merely because you have worked harder than your slaves. You are what I should call a unique slave-driver," Barbara sweetly explained.

"And you have far more good sense than you sometimes appear to have," Leila complimented. Whereupon the two beamed at each other and shook hands.

"Don't fail to be here for another rehearsal Thursday night and the dress rehearsal on Saturday night," were Leila's parting words to the cast, delivered in the middle of the front walk to the

actor group who had followed her out on the veranda.

She started across the campus in the pale winter moonlight with Marjorie and Jerry, grumbling in pretended displeasure at the amount of things she had to do during the next few days.

"Don't say a word!" Marjorie exclaimed. "Two more rehearsals this week, the Beauty contest on Friday night, Muriel's birthday's next Monday. Saturday afternoon we have to go into town to buy presents. Monday afternoon we'll have to go over to Baretti's to trim the birthday table. Sunday I have to write letters, study and do a dozen and one small things. I can say now I have nothing special on hand after Monday, but long before then I'll have a new lot of stunts planned for the rest of next week." Her tone grew more despairing with each enumeration.

"You have so much trouble, Beauty, I'll say nothing of my own," was Leila's commiserating return, delivered with an unsympathetic grin. "I am like an Irish fish out of water without Midget. That much I will say." Vera had gone to New York for a few days' visit with her father before he sailed on an all-winter cruise on the Mediterranean.

"I never saw an Irish fish. How does an Irish fish look?" Jerry critically demanded.

"Like me. Did you not just hear me say it?" Leila retorted,

"I must go to the Arms to see Miss Susanna this week," Marjorie observed irrelevantly. No one appeared to be interested in her announcement. Jerry and Leila were conducting a laughing argument which had to do with Irish and non-Irish fishes.

"I love to talk to myself," she made plaintive complaint when Jerry and Leila finally paused for breath.

"And I had far rather talk to you, Beauty, than to some P. G.'s I know," Leila assured with deep meaning.

"You may talk to *me,* Bean," Jerry graciously permitted. "I am appreciative."

During the remainder of the short hike across the campus Marjorie became the laughing, but unimpressed, recipient of flattering attention.

"Jerry," she burst out abruptly, soon after the two girls were in their own room, "it isn't enough for us to say to each other that we are glad Miss Walker didn't write that letter. It is not fair to her not to tell her the whole thing. Do you think it is?"

Jerry cocked her head to one side and considered. "Nope," she answered after due deliberation. "I suppose she ought to be informed that she is not the villain we took her to be. It may take marvelous managing by Marvelous Manager to tell her the awful truth without rousing her ire. According to Gentleman Gus she is anything but a lamb-like person when she isn't pleased."

"Would you be willing to go with me to see her?" Marjorie asked, her brown eyes meditatively fixed on Jerry. "You are as——"

"Deep in the mud as you are in the mire," supplied Jerry humorously.

"Something like that," Marjorie agreed with a smile. "The letter was sent to me in the first place, but the credit of the discovery that Miss Walker didn't write it belongs to you."

"I'm not likely to pick any bouquets in such a briar patch," shrugged Jerry. "Don't want 'em. More likely she'll get wrathful at us when she finds we have kept the forged letter so long without going to her and having matters out. But Jeremiah is not afraid. Let us hope she behaves like the letter she really wrote."

In the act of removing one of her slippers, Jerry took it by the strap. Waving it jauntily she launched into a Bean jingle.

"Upon the haughty soph we'll call
To clear her tarnished name;
For we have seen, O, noble Bean,
That she was not to blame."

"That was an inspired jingle, Jeremiah," Marjorie approved, her face singularly sunny. "Miss Walker is not to blame. Since we know she isn't, we should be, if we didn't hurry to tell her so."

CHAPTER XXV.

"NEARER TO THE HEART'S DESIRE."

DUE to the numerous details Marjorie had on hand, on Saturday afternoon, Marjorie and Jerry still found themselves facing the call upon Miss Walker. They deplored the fact to each other as they made ready to go to town with Leila, Ronny, Lucy and Katherine Langly to shop for Muriel's approaching birthday. Muriel had been left out of the shopping party. As a consequence she had made dire threats to disappear on her birthday and "spoil everything." Jerry declared that no one was foolish enough to believe she would.

"I never realized how much work you put into that first Beauty contest, Leila Greatheart, until I saw the working out of this last one," Marjorie confided to Leila on the way to town that afternoon. She was occupying her usual place beside Leila on the front seat. "I felt so differently about the one last night. I had a chance to hide away. I was so glad not to be in it, and on parade. It was darling

in you to give me the judges' last speech in the contest. And didn't my fairy-tale princess look beautiful when she came forward to receive the guerdon? Those wonderful long-stemmed pink roses went so well with that crystal-beaded white frock she wore."

"It was a dream of a dress," Leila nodded. "At last we have a new Beauty on the campus. Only I am glad I was not one of the judges. I should never have displaced you for her. She is still too much the Ice Queen to be to my taste."

"You are the loyalest of loyal old dears," Marjorie's hand came to rest for a moment on Leila's shoulder. "I know you went strictly against your inclinations; just to please me. Someday you'll see that there was method in my madness. The enchantment will be broken and the freed princess will yet prove herself a credit to Hamilton."

"I doubt if I shall be here to see it," Leila made sceptical reply. "You are feeling most optimistic because you have succeeded in wishing your beauty reputation onto someone else."

Marjorie merely smiled. "I'm a venerable P. G. now. I'm beyond such vain frivolousness."

"I see no signs of it," Leila told her discouragingly. "I am sorry now that I hid you on the judges' stand.

"Too late," Marjorie's merry little laugh rippled out. Her mood was decidedly optimistic as a result of the successful way in which clever Leila had carried on the Beauty contest.

As the president of the sophs, Augusta Forbes had signed the notice of the coming contest which Leila had first posted on the main bulletin board. This fact had appeared to point to the sophs as the promoters of the Beauty contest. Privately directed by Leila, Gussie had next called a class meeting for the express purpose of arousing sophomore interest and had tactfully suggested that the contest should be held under sophomore auspices.

While the sophs were still divided into two factions, as a result of the fall elections, basket ball had done something to mitigate their wrath against one another. It seemed the irony of fate that Louise Walker and Augusta Forbes, rival centers and unfriendly classmates, should have each admired the other's basket ball prowess. Such, however, was the situation between them. More, they were hovering on the verge of friendly acquaintance.

This marvel Marjorie had already faintly divined by a curious mental process of deduction which had developed within as a result of long-patient working and waiting. She also saw signs which pointed to a re-united sophomore class in the not far dis-

tant future. Her conviction was borne out in this respect by the eager good-will with which the sophs boosted the Beauty walk beforehand and confidently paraded themselves around the gym for the judges' inspection on the fateful night.

The girls of the other three classes were no less anxious to take part in it. Even the dormitory girls made an extra trip from town so as to be in the fun. Of the old Travelers only Ronny and Muriel competed. Vera had not yet returned to Hamilton. As manager Leila had a good excuse for staying out of it. Jerry demanded also to be a judge. She gave Leila such a strenuous sample of the strength and volume of her tones that Leila promptly accepted her. The senior class furnished the third judge; a stentorian-voiced senior who often acted as referee at basket ball games, and had developed amazing lung power as a result.

While the Forbes faction of the sophs was supposedly hostile of attitude toward Doris Monroe, its members had agreed among themselves that, as a possible winner of the Beauty contest, she was "the sophs' best bet." In consequence they suddenly began exhibiting toward her a new friendliness which warmed with the near approach of the contest. This put Doris on her mettle as nothing else could have done. She had been saving the crystal-

beaded frock for what she might deem a really great occasion. She now felt the occasion had arrived. Her one disturbing thought was that Marjorie Dean would undoubtedly enter the contest. She resolved that she must, yes, she would completely outshine her.

When the much-heralded contest was finally over and Doris stood triumphant in front of the judges' stand, the light gleaming on her wavy golden hair, her strange green eyes dark with excitement, her white, graceful arms laden with the long-stemmed pink roses, she might have been posing as lovely summer in her early rose-decked beauty. The faint, fascinating smile that came and went on her red lips gave no clue to what was going on in her mind. Her slow, occasional careless glances about the gymnasium were motivated by the distinct secret purpose of locating Marjorie. Nor did she learn until long afterward that the clear, vibrant voice of the judge who spoke the final charge to Beautye brighte, reverence in its intonation, was that of the girl she affected to despise. Having enjoyed the contest incognito Marjorie had disappeared during the first congratulatory rush toward Doris.

She found remembrance of last night's contest lingering persistently in her mind as she and her chums essayed the round of the shops. None of

the party knew what they wished to buy for Muriel. They were in a wondrous merry mood and had difficulty in settling down to a selection of gifts. As they trooped, chattering, out of the town's one art store with arms full of birthday bundles a familiar white car shot past them down the street, disappearing into a side street. The occupants of the white car were Doris Monroe and Leslie Cairns.

Marjorie gave a kind of disappointed gulp as she glimpsed the stunning white car and its passengers. It was the first time she had either seen or heard of these two as having been together since before Thanksgiving. Augusta Forbes and her two chums had later confidentially reported to Marjorie the occasion at the Colonial when Leslie and Doris had quarreled. Marjorie had hoped then that the breach between the two girls might widen. Robin's assurance that Doris had been "perfectly sweet" to her at the old-fashioned hop was a hopeful sign. Freed from Leslie's pernicious influence, Doris's college future was likely to be rosy.

Now it appeared that Doris was not estranged, perhaps did not desire to be free from Leslie. Marjorie felt chagrin and disappointment take hold of her. She half concluded that her chums were correct in holding the opinion that further effort to win over the ungracious and ungrateful sophomore

would be a useless expense of time and spirit. Should she, now that through her private effort Doris had been acclaimed the college beauty, allow Doris to continue her college journey without further solicitude on her part? Her generous soul instantly rebelled against the thought. She had the principle to consider in the peculiar task she had whimsically set for herself. So far as she knew the work of moulding beautiful Doris Monroe "nearer to the heart's desire" had only begun.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SUNSHINE FROM SHADOW

"Look here!" Jerry, who had gone with Leila to the garage to put away the car, bounced into the room flourishing two letters.

"Why, *where* did they come from? There wasn't a sign of mail in our divisions when I came upstairs. That was not more than half an hour ago. Besides that was the last mail." Marjorie's eyes had opened to their widest extent at sight of the letters.

"Ah-h-h! There's a reason; and it took yours truly to find it." Jerry gave a self-appreciative crow. "Here's your letter." She tendered one of the two to Marjorie. She made no effort to open the other.

Marjorie's color heightened as she glanced at the writing on the envelope. "It's from Hal. You know that. Something unusual must be happening in Sanford. This is the second letter I've had from him within a week."

"When you open it kindly gaze at the post-mark," Jerry directed with a knowing smile.

"Why, Jerry!" Marjorie had already obeyed the direction. "November third! Where did it come from? This is another mysterious mystery." She read Hal's brief letter, a puzzled frown knotting her forehead. "*This* is the letter Hal thought I did not answer. I had to explain to him when I went home that I had not received it. Well, of all surprises."

"The end of them is not yet. Here's another belated missive. I thought I'd let you get over the shock of the first before handing you another jolt."

"So kind in you, Jeremiah." Marjorie's gratitude was of a very casual order. You mean you wanted to be teasing. This is from Miss Susanna," she announced after a hasty inspection. "It was"—again her voice achieved astonished height—"mailed *last Monday.* The time has come, Jeremiah for you to prove your worth as a great investigator and throw light upon this mystery."

"It was that *treacherous, deceiving old bulletin board,*" emphasized Jerry, then giggled. "D is on the top row, you know. The back piece of the board gapes away from the face of it a little, just at the D section. One of the maids must have tucked Hal's letter into the wrong place and there it stayed. Another of the maids must have done the same thing recently. I found both letters there. I was peeking

and peering disconsolately at that empty D space when through a tiny crack at the back of it I saw a bit of white. I went fishing with a hat pin and finally got hold of a corner of Miss Susanna's letter. Pretty soon I had fished up both of them. What I'm wondering is this. Did anyone cache them for spite? I trust not." Jerry put on a look of virtuous horror. I mean I wouldn't be surprised if someone had."

"Suspicious old Jeremiah." Marjorie raised a reproving finger at her chum. Her ready smile contradicted intent to reprove. "Miss Susanna wants to see me. In this note she asked me to dinner at the Arms on last Wednesday evening. Here it is the Saturday after! What must she think of me. I'll hurry downstairs this instant and telephone her."

Marjorie darted from the room and took the stairs at what she used at home to call a gallop. She blessed telephone service with all her heart as she quickly got Jonas on the wire and asked him to call Miss Susanna to the telephone. It was not a long conversation she presently exchanged with the mistress of Hamilton Arms. Miss Susanna was not fond of talking on the telephone. But it was a most happy little talk. Marjorie turned from the 'phone wondering a little why Miss Susanna had laid stress on inviting her alone of the Travelers to dinner at the Arms the next evening. The mistress of the Arms

had not said she wished to be alone with Marjorie, but she had intimated it vaguely.

Turning mechanically toward the stairs Marjorie crashed squarely against a young woman who had just decended the last step. Both girls apologized first; took stock of each other afterward. Marjorie drew a quick breath. She was facing Louise Walker. Obeying an impulse she cried out:

"Oh, Miss Walker, I have been trying to see you for several days. Would you be willing to come upstairs to Miss Macy's and my room? We have something to show you which is important to you."

"I—certainly I will come." Miss Walker's intonation was remarkably gentle and friendly. "Will you lead the way? I am not often at Wayland Hall and know very little about it." She motioned Marjorie to precede her up the stairs. "I had been calling on a sophomore, Miss Vinton."

"She is such a clever girl," Marjorie said admiringly. "We have had many interesting talks about chemistry experiments we have made." Her winsome smile drew an answering smile from Miss Walker. The sophomore was wondering if Marjorie had heard any of the cutting remarks she had made about her and Robin Page, early in the fall, when Page and Dean had championed the cause of

Augusta Forbes. She was astonished now to find Marjorie so friendly.

"For goodness sake!" In the act of nibbling a large three-cornered piece of peanut brittle Jerry let it fall to the rug at sight of Marjorie and her visitor. She bent to retrieve it, took an unintentional step forward and planted one foot firmly upon it. Such a disaster called for mirth which was quick in coming. Marjorie merrily seated the guest and offered her peanut brittle from a box. Jerry loudly mourned the loss of "the biggest, best bit of brittle in the brittle box," as she gathered up the sticky fragments of it from the rug. She made short work of the task. She was eager to join the pair of girls on the other side of the room.

Marjorie kept the conversation centered upon impersonal topics until Jerry completed the trio. Then she began in her candid fashion: "Miss Walker, we hope you will not feel, after you have heard what I am going to tell you, that we have not been fair to you in not having told you before. Will you please bring the letters, Jerry?"

Jerry complied with alacrity. Meanwhile Marjorie had gone steadily on with the account of the receipt of the first letter, bearing Miss Walker's signature. The latter sat listening in genuine myst

fication. She stared in bewilderment at the outrageous letter which Jerry placed in her hand.

"Why, this is dreadful!" she cried as she read it, her fair skin flooding with indignant red. "That's not my writing! Why didn't you come to me and ask me about it?"

"How could I?" Marjorie said rather sadly. She had expected the question. "You see, I didn't know your handwriting. I didn't know— Please let us not talk about that part of it. We were so glad when Jerry received the letter from you about the handkerchief. Then we *knew* you had not written that hateful letter. She pointed the tip of a scornful finger at the forgery. "Since things have worked out so well, let's be thankful, and friends."

"I'd love to be," Louise answered with sincerity. "First you must forgive me for being so disagreeable last fall. I've been sorry for quite a while, but there seemed no opportunity to tell you so. I understand Miss Forbes now, too. I like her, but I'm afraid she doesn't like me; nor never will."

"Go and call on her very soon. She'd be so pleased. I'm sure she would. She admires your basket ball playing." This affably from Jerry who was far more favorable impressed with the sophomore that she had expected to be.

"There's one thing I believe I ought to tell you to

clear my slate," Miss Walker said presently in a half hesitating tone. "It's about Miss Peyton and Miss Carter. I mention them frankly because I intend to tell them that I have seen you, and of our talk." Her voice strengthened into one of resolution. "May I ask you? Has Professor Matthews ever reprimanded you and Miss Macy for being unduly noisy in your room?" She stared anxiously at Marjorie.

"Why, *no*." Marjorie cast an enigmatical glance at Jerry. Then the two laughed. "Please pardon us for laughing," she apologized. "Last fall Miss Peyton threatened to report us to President Matthews. About two weeks later a letter came to me in the president's hand. It really took courage to open it. Oh-h-h," she drew a soft laughing breath, "it was an invitation to dinner at his home to meet one of his nieces who had come from the west to visit the Matthews. Jerry and I thought then that perhaps Miss Peyton had decided against reporting us to him."

"I wish she had, but she didn't. I advised her against such petty spite," Louise declared disgustedly. "I am glad President Matthews ignored the report. She made it in person. She told me as much, but she would not tell me what he said to her in the matter. I suspect Prexy was very unsympathetic." Louise's gray, long-lashed eyes sparkled with quiet

humor. "Anyway, I'm free from that worry. I wanted to tell you that as much as you wanted to tell me about the letter."

Frank confession from caller and guests banished the strain which had marked the beginning of the interview. Presently Louise had been invited to remain at the Hall to dinner and afterward hob-nob with the chums in Ronny's and Lucy's room where a newly-arrived fruit cake sent Lucy by her mother was to be the center of attraction at a jollification.

The three girls were making rapid strides toward friendship when a knock at the door revealed Gussie Forbes and Calista Wilmot as demanding the hospitality of Room 15. It was the satisfying climax to a mutual admiration society which had sprung up between Louise and Gussie on the very field of battle. It was a case of when "soph meets soph." The two distinguished centers found so much in common to talk about they blissfully forgot Marjorie, Jerry and Calista for the time being, greatly to the delight of these three.

Shortly before Louise Walker went to her own campus house she said to Marjorie in a low tone: "Will you come with me now to your room. My wraps are there. I will bring them in here, but I wish to say something very quietly to you."

"We're going into my room for a minute or so,

gang," Marjorie called to the others as she and the sophomore went out the door.

"It's about Miss Monroe I wish to speak," began Louise hurriedly. "Could you—do you know what ought to be done to keep her away from that Miss Cairns? The freshies seem to admire them as a stunning combination, plus the white car. But the sophs are decidedly against Miss Cairns. A good many stories about her dishonorable ways while she was a student at Hamilton have drifted down to us from friends and older sisters who have been graduated from here. We have been told that she was expelled from Hamilton, together with a crowd of her chums. She was here when you entered college, was she not?" Louise asked earnestly.

"She was a sophomore when we were freshies. She was expelled from Hamilton at the end of her junior year," Marjorie said evenly. "I know of a great many things she has done that she should not have done, yet she is somewhat like another girl I know whose mother died when she was a baby and who grew up believing she must always have her own way. The girl I mention suddenly faced about and made herself over. Perhaps Leslie Cairns will do the same. I think it would be far better if Miss Monroe had nothing whatever to do with her. The

trouble is—no one but Miss Monroe can decide that. All we can do is to help her by our good will."

"I understand. You mean if Miss Monroe has enough interests to keep her occupied and happy on the campus she won't turn to Miss Cairns for entertainment."

"Yes," Marjorie returned. "We Travelers have been watching over her. She is not only beautiful. Her roommate is Muriel Harding, you know. Muriel says she is brilliant in her subjects. She can draw, paint, play the piano and knows a good deal about outdoor sports. We can't afford to have such good material go to waste, can we?"

"No, we can't." Louise's hand reached for Marjorie's. The two looked into each other's eyes and made a wordless compact which had to do with the deliverance of the enchanted princess from the power of the wicked wizard.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MARVELOUS MANAGER

WHILE the discussion concerning herself was going on between Marjorie and Louise Walker, the enchanted princess and the wicked wizard were amicably eating dinner at the Colonial. Leslie was listening with acute attention to Doris's unemotional account of the Beauty contest related in the drawling English diction which she had used since childhood.

"You think you're it, don't you, Goldie?" she said with a slow grin when Doris had finished her recital.

"Yes; why shouldn't I?" countered Doris, unruffled by the slangy question. She was very desirous of going to New York with Leslie for the Christmas holidays. She had no intention of quarreling with her and thus defeating her own ends.

"I've no objection," Leslie amiably assured her. "You haven't told me where Bean was, though. Certainly she wasn't in the gym or *you'd* never have got away with the prize. She must have purposely effaced herself. She has it put all over every other

girl I ever saw when it comes to Beauty. I hate the ground she walks on, yet Bean is beautiful Bean. Don't let it worry you, though."

Doris smiled rather condescendingly at Leslie. "You know it doesn't worry me, Leslie. You are absurd. No, Miss Dean was not at the contest. Some of her friends were, but she was no where to be seen. Don't you think the contest itself is very quaint? Miss Harper is really immensely clever."

"Next to Bean, I hate *her*." Leslie's face lowered. "Don't mention her to me ever. Since Bean handed over the college beautyship to you, make the most of it. You'd better give a dinner to some of the sophs who belong to the best families. They're the ones who count in college. They can either make you or break you."

"I—I haven't decided just what I'd best do after Christmas to keep up my reputation as the college beauty." Doris experienced a sudden violent dislike for Leslie. She wished she had never seen her. She wished she had not promised to go to New York with her. She had had a taste of real girl happiness, spontaneous and free from the plotting and planning which seemed ever to attend Leslie's movements. Once again she was hearing the quaint adjuration to Beautye "to say a prayer of thankfulness at even for the gifte of Beautye by the grace of

God." Once again that clear, resonant voice rang in her ears. Though her new, unbidden mood soon left her, it would come again. The leaven had begun to work.

On the way up the main drive to Wayland Hall the following afternoon she came face to face with Marjorie. She bowed with less coolness than was her wont. "Good afternoon, Miss Monroe," Marjorie said sedately, looking neither smiling nor serious. She was on her way to Hamilton Arms to spend the rest of the afternoon and evening with Miss Susanna.

Doris had a faint impression of having known someone else whose voice was like Marjorie's. She could not recall any such person. She grudgingly admitted to herself that Leslie's rude appraisal of Marjorie's good looks was not without foundation. Doris was fundamentally sound of judgment and honest enough not to deceive herself.

"You and I are going to have one of our old-fashioned heart to heart talks this afternoon," greeted Miss Susanna as she folded Marjorie in her arms and kissed her on the forehead and both cheeks. "We're going to have a light tea now and dinner at seven. Tea will be in the study. I'm going to ask you to help me this afternoon go over some of Uncle Brooke's papers. I'd like to arrange them in

chronological order. 'A nice sort of hostess I am, to invite you here to dine and then make you work for your dinner," chuckled the old lady.

"You know there is nothing I'd rather do. You are a fraud." Marjorie swooped down on her, arms flying, mouth open, fingers curved into claws. It was her favorite mode of onslaught upon her general when at home. Miss Susanna squealed, dodged and giggled as the avenging bogie bore down upon her. A merry tussle ensued in which Miss Susanna held her own.

It was not until they had settled down at the study table with the tea spread out upon it that they behaved with anything but hilarity.

"I never treated you to such a tussle before." Marjorie declared blithely as she reached for the cup of tea Miss Susanna held out to her. "Those are General's and my favorite tactics at home. Oh, wait until we get you there. We'll have some grand family frolics at Castle Dean."

"I am looking forward to them with all my heart. This will be the first Christmas I have spent away from the Arms since *he* died. I am sure he would wish me to go with you." Miss Hamilton regarded Marjorie with deep solemnity. "Now tell me about the girls. What have you all

been busy doing?" She switched the subject from herself with characteristic abruptness.

During the light meal Marjorie kept strictly to the subject of her friends' and her doings on the campus. Miss Susanna listened to the lively recital with apparent pleasure. Now and then Marjorie would catch the old lady's eyes resting upon her with an expression of brooding tenderness which she had never before seen in them.

When Miss Susanna had rung for Jonas to come for the tea service she straightened in her chair with a nervous kind of energy that Marjorie had learned to construe as a sign that the last of the Hamilton's was about to make an important disclosure. It was an entirely different attitude from that which she invariably adopted in giving a surprise. Without a word she rose, and, walking to one end of the study turned the key in a tall narrow mahogany cabinet which Marjorie had not seen before in the study.

"These are the most precious things in the world to me, Marjorie," Miss Susanna said as she turned a brass key that stood in the lock. "Come here, child. Hold out your arms." She swung open the door of the cabinet, revealing shelf upon shelf of papers. They were, for the most part, letters without envelopes, and documents. "This is his story, in his own hand," she continued musingly. She

carefully lifted the pile of papers from the top shelf and placed it upon Marjorie's arms. The amazed lieutenant's arms were steady, but her heart was thumping wildly.

"Miss Susanna," she managed to gasp," truly—are you going to *allow me to look at them?*"

"Truly, I am." There was a tiny catch in Miss Susanna's crisp voice. "No one has touched them since I partially collated them and put them here years ago. Bring them over to the table and lay them upon it. I have something to say to you. Marjorie Dean. I've been wondering for a week just how I'd like to say it to you. Well, the simplest way is best. I've decided to give his story to the world. I've selected my biographer. I can only hope that the one I wish to write the biography will not be too modest to accept my offer. The person I have in mind will probably declare that—"

"If you feel you have chosen the right person, then you must have," Marjorie interrupted. "Oh, pardon me, Miss Susanna. I couldn't wait to say what I felt. You will have to *make* the one you have chosen see matters as you do." Marjorie's mind was already made up. Since Miss Susanna had actually decided to permit Brooke Hamilton's biography to be written she must be encouraged and

supported in her decision. There must be no refusal of any sort to discourage her.

"Yes, I am sure I have chosen the right person." Again Marjorie caught the divinely tender look in her friend's eyes. "You have always seen matters about him much as I have, Marvelous Manager. That is the reason I have chosen *you* to give a faithful presentation of *him* to the world."

"Miss Su-u-san-na. I—" With a little inarticulate murmur Marjorie's curly head went down on the table, her face hidden in the curve of her arm. She did not raise it when she felt a hand rest lightly upon her curls. Silence reigned in the study, a calm, stately silence over which Brooke Hamilton himself seemed to preside. The impression of him was borne to the two who had united to keep his memory green. Afterward Miss Susanna and Marjorie both happily admitted to having had the same impression of his immediate presence in the study.

Presently, when the great emotional strain upon both women had lessened, they commenced an eager discussion of plans concerning the best way of writing Brooke Hamilton's biography.

"You fell into your own trap, young lady. You can't back out," Miss Susanna told Marjorie with apparent relish.

"I don't wish to back out; *never; never,*" was the fervent assertion. It's the greatest good fortune that has ever happened to me. I should like to drop chemistry, French, the dormitory, welfare—" Marjorie lightly waved away her enumeration of duties. "But I can't."

"I wish you and Jerry would come and live at the Arms while you are in process of writing the biography. Perhaps you may be able to manage it, in the spring. You and I are to go to President Matthews with the news tomorrow. I have already written him that we would call at his Hamilton Hall office tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock. I have a curiosity to walk across the campus. When we go to Castle Dean for Christmas we will perfect all our plans. Shall we tell our girls now or wait until after the holidays?"

"Oh, please let us tell them soon," pleaded Marjorie. "It will be the most wonderful Christmas present for the old Travelers. 'Peace on earth; good will toward men.' Marjorie hummed under her breath. Her eyes luminous, she rose, went over to Miss Susanna. Standing behind her chair she dropped her arms over the old lady's shoulders. It was the special caress she loved to give her captain.

"Yes, 'Peace on earth; good will toward men,'"

Miss Susanna repeated, her small face bright with love. "And the reason I can say it is because I had the supreme good fortune to fall into the hands of Marvelous Manager."

How Marjorie spent the remainder of her college post graduate year between Hamilton College and Hamilton Arms will be found in: "MAJORIE DEAN AT HAMILTON ARMS."

THE END.

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